

Vipassana Newsletter

In the tradition of Sayagyi U Ba Khin, as taught by S. N. Goenka

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Vipassana Research Institute

Dhamma Giri, Igatpuri-422 403, Maharashtra

WORDS OF DHAMMA

*Samāhito sampajāno,
sato Buddhassa sāvako;
vedanā ca pajānāti,
vedanānañca sambhavaṃ.
Yattha cetā nirujjhanti,
maggāñca khayagāminam;
vedanānaṃ khayā bhikkhu,
nicchāto parinibbuto'ti.¹*

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. A meditator who has reached the end (has experienced the entire range) of sensations (and has gone beyond) is freed from craving, is fully liberated.

—*Saṃyutta Nikāya* 2.4.249

VEDANĀ IN PAṬICCASAMUPPĀDA

Vipassana Research Institute

(The following is an extract from *The Importance of Vedanā and Sampajāñña* published by the Vipassana Research Institute.)

Paṭiccasamuppāda, or the Law of Dependent Origination, is fundamental to the teaching of the Buddha. Emphasizing its importance, the Buddha said:

*Yo paṭiccasamuppādaṃ passati,
so dhammaṃ passati;
Yo dhammaṃ passati,
so paṭiccasamuppādaṃ passati.¹*

One who sees the *paṭiccasamuppāda* sees the Dhamma.

One who sees the Dhamma sees the *paṭiccasamuppāda*.

Paṭiccasamuppāda explains that *saṃsāra*, the process of repeated existences, is perpetuated by a chain of interconnected links of cause and effect; it also reveals the method of breaking this chain and putting an end to the process. The Buddha said:

*Taṇhādutiyo puriso,
dīghamaddhāna saṃsaram;
itthabhāvāññathābhāvaṃ,
saṃsāraṃ nātivattati.²*

The man with craving as his companion has been

flowing in the stream of repeated existences from time immemorial. He comes into being, experiences various types of miseries, dies again and again, and does not put an end to this unbroken process of becoming.

This is *saṃsāra*, the world of suffering, as explained by the Buddha. He further said:

*Etam ādīnavaṃ nātva,
taṇhaṃ dukkhassa sambhavaṃ;
Vītataṇho anādāno,
sato bhikkhu paribbaje.³*

Rightly understanding the perils of this process, Fully realizing craving as its cause, Becoming free from craving and attachment, One should mindfully lead the life of detachment.

Such an approach, he said, will have great benefit—

*Nandī-saṃyojano loko,
vitakkassa vicāraṇam
Taṇhāya vippahānena,
nibbānaṃ iti vuccati.⁴*

Pleasure is the binding force in the world.

Rolling thought processes are its ever-changing base.

With the complete eradication of craving,

The state called *nibbāna* is attained.

These statements made by the Buddha describe the nature of *saṃsāra*, the state of suffering, and the nature of *nibbāna*, the state of final emancipation. But how can detachment be developed, and craving eradicated?

This is the practical aspect of Dhamma discovered by Siddhattha Gotama, the realisation that made him a Buddha, and that he in turn revealed to the world by the doctrine of *paṭiccasamuppāda*.

According to this doctrine, twelve links form the wheel of becoming (*bhava-cakka*). They are:

1. *avijjā* (ignorance)
2. *saṅkhāra* (volitional activities)
3. *viññāṇa* (consciousness)
4. *nāma-rūpa* (mind and matter)
5. *salāyatana* (six sense doors)
6. *phassa* (contact)
7. *vedanā* (sensation)
8. *taṇhā* (craving)
9. *upādāna* (clinging)
10. *bhava* (becoming)
11. *jāti* (birth)
12. *jarā-maraṇa* (decay and death)

Dependent on *avijjā* arise *saṅkhāra*;
dependent on *saṅkhāra* arises *viññāṇa*;
dependent on *viññāṇa* arise *nāma-rūpa*;
dependent on *nāma-rūpa* arise *salāyatana*;
dependent on *salāyatana* arises *phassa*;
dependent on *phassa* arises *vedanā*;
dependent on *vedanā* arises *taṇhā*;
dependent on *taṇhā* arises *upādāna*.

Thus, this vicious circle of misery rolls on. In other words, the origin of each link depends upon the preceding one. As long as this chain of twelve causal relations operates, the wheel of becoming (*bhava-cakka*) keeps turning, bringing nothing but suffering. This process of cause and effect is called *anuloma-paṭiccasamuppāda* (direct Law of Dependent Origination).

Every link of *anuloma* results in *dukkha*, suffering, as a result of *avijjā*, which is at the base of every link. Thus, the process of *anuloma* clarifies the first two Noble Truths: *dukkha-sacca*, suffering, and *samudaya-sacca*, its origination and multiplication.

Our task is to emerge from the *bhava-cakka* of *dukkha*. Explaining how to do so, the Buddha said

that when any one of the links of the chain is broken, the wheel of becoming comes to an end, resulting in the cessation of suffering. This is called *paṭiloma-paṭiccasamuppāda* (the Law of Dependent Origination in reverse order) which clarifies the third and fourth Noble Truths, *nirodha-sacca* the cessation of suffering and *nirodha-gāminī-paṭipadā-sacca*, the path that leads to the cessation of suffering.

How can that be achieved? At which link can the chain be broken? Through deep insight, the Buddha discovered that the crucial link is *vedanā*. In the *anuloma-paṭiccasamuppāda*, he says ‘*Vedanā-paccayā-taṇhā*’.

Vedanā is the cause of *taṇhā*, which gives rise to *dukkha*. In order to remove the cause of *dukkha* or *taṇhā*, one must not allow *vedanā* to give rise to *taṇhā*; in other words, one must practise Vipassana meditation at this juncture so that *avijjā* becomes *vijjā* or *paññā* (wisdom). One has to observe *vedanā*, to experience and to comprehend the truth of its arising and passing away, *anicca*.

By Vipassana meditation, as one experiences *vedanā* in the proper way, one comes out of the delusion of *nicca-saññā* (perception of permanence) by the development of *anicca-bodha* or *anicca-vijjā* (the wisdom of impermanence) towards *vedanā*.

This is practised by observing with equanimity the arising and passing away of *vedanā*. With *anicca-bodha*, the habit pattern of the mind changes. Instead of the earlier pattern of *vedanā-paccayā-taṇhā*, through *anicca-vijjā* it becomes *vedanā-paccayā-paññā*. As *paññā* becomes stronger and stronger, naturally *saññā*, and with it, *taṇhā*, becomes weaker and weaker.

The process of multiplication of suffering with the base of *avijjā* then becomes the process of the cessation of suffering, with *vijjā* as the base. As this process continues, a time comes when there is the complete cessation of *vedanā* as well as *taṇhā*—‘*Vedanā-nirodhā, taṇhā-nirodho*’.

This state of emancipation is a state beyond mind and matter, where both *vedanā* and *saññā* cease. One can experience this for a few seconds, minutes, hours, or days when, according to one’s own capacity, one becomes established in *nirodha-samāpatti* by practising Vipassana.

After the period of *nirodha-samāpatti*, when one comes back to the sensuous field of mind and matter, one again experiences *vedanā*. But now the whole habit pattern of the mind has changed, and continued practice leads to the stage where one does

not generate aversion or craving at all because *anusaya* and *āsava* (the deep-rooted mental impurities) are eradicated. In this way, by the breaking of one link—*vedanā*, the whole process is shattered and the wheel of repeated existence is completely broken.

If we want to advance on the path of liberation, we have to work at the level of *vedanā* because it is here that the momentum of the wheel of misery can be arrested.

With *vedanā* starts the turning of the *bhava-cakka*, leading (because of *avijjā*) to *vedanā-paccayā tanhā*, which causes suffering. This is the path, which ignorant persons (*puthujjana*) follow, since they react to *vedanā* and generate *tanhā*.

However, from *vedanā*, the *dhamma-cakka*, or the wheel of cessation of suffering (*dukkha-nirodha-gāminī-paṭipadā*) can start to rotate, leading to *vedanā-nirodhā*, *tanhā-nirodho*—the end of craving, as a result of *anicca-vijjā* or *paññā*, leading to the cessation of suffering. This is the path which wise persons (*sapañña*) follow by not reacting to *vedanā*, because they have developed *anicca-bodha* by the practice of Vipassana.

Many of the contemporaries of the Buddha held the view that craving causes suffering and that to remove suffering one has to abstain from the objects of craving. Having learnt to examine the depths of his mind, the Buddha realized that between the external object and mental reflex of craving is a missing link—*vedanā* (sensation).

Whenever we encounter an object through the five physical senses or the mind, a sensation arises; and based on the sensation, *tanhā* arises. If the sensation is pleasant we crave to prolong it, and if it is unpleasant we crave to be rid of it. It is in the chain of Dependent Origination that the Buddha expressed his great discovery.

Phassa-paccayā vedanā

Vedanā-paccayā tanhā.⁵

Dependent on contact, sensation arises.

Dependent on sensation, craving arises.

The immediate cause for the arising of craving and of suffering is, therefore, not something outside of us but rather the sensations that occur within us. To free ourselves of craving and of suffering we must deal with this inner reality of sensations. Doing so is the practical way to emerge from suffering.

By developing *anicca-vijjā* (the wisdom of impermanence), we learn to cut the knots of our misery and witness the true nature of Dhamma. Therefore, *vedanā* is the cause of our bondage when not properly observed, and it is also the means of liberation when properly observed by understanding the Dhamma, the law of *paṭiccasamuppāda*. ■

Notes: (All references are from VRI edition)

1. *Majjhima Nikāya* 1.306
2. *Suttanipāta* 745
3. Ibid. 746
4. *Samyutta Nikāya* 1.1.64
5. *Mahāvagga* (*Vinaya Piṭaka*) 1

ONE DAY CHILDREN'S COURSES IN MUMBAI

Date	Venue	Eligibility	Registration
11-4	Ulhasnagar	10-12 yrs	8 & 9-4
11-4	Andheri	13-16 yrs	8 & 9-4
25-4	Mulund	13-16 yrs	23 & 24-4
9-5	Ulhasnagar	13-16 yrs	6 & 7-5
9-5	Andheri	10-12 yrs	6 & 7-5
23-5	Mulund	10-12 yrs	20 & 21-5

Course Timing: 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. **Registration**

Timings: 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. **Course Addresses:**

Andheri: Dada Saheb Gaikwad Sansthan, Babasaheb Ambedkar Marg, RTO Corner, Four Bungalows, Andheri (W), Phone: 2683 4820. **Mulund:** Mulund College of Commerce, Sarojini Naidu Road, Near Ration Office and Court, Mulund (W) Phone: 5598 3338. **Ulhasnagar:** Guru Nanak High School, Kurla Camp, Ulhasnagar-4. Phone: 252 2693. [NB *Please bring cushion. *Please register on the specified phone numbers. If you are unable to attend after registration, please inform in advance. *Please arrive on time for the course.]

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IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT: Vipassana Newsletter or Patrika is being sent to all new students in India free of charge as a special privilege. If you wish to continue receiving privilege copies of the Newsletter in 2004, you are requested to cut this portion and send it, along with the pasted label on the reverse, to VRI, Patrika Section, Dhamma Giri, Igatpuri 422 403. Otherwise, it will be assumed that you do not wish to receive the Newsletter and further copies will not be sent. You can also choose to become a lifetime or annual subscriber of the Vipassana Newsletter. (Meditators who have already paid the subscription need not send any response.)

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Current and past issues of the Hindi Vipassana Patrika and English Newsletter can be downloaded from the VRI website:

<http://www.vri.dhamma.org/NewslettersHindi/index.html>
<http://www.vri.dhamma.org/newsletters/index.html>

VIPASSANA WORKSHOPS IN 2004

(For contact details of the venues of the workshops, see the enclosed Schedule of Vipassana courses)

Dhamma Tapovana, Igatpuri

AT Workshop: 15 April (8 p.m.) to 25 April (11 a.m.).

Dhamma Punna, Pune city (Swargate)

'Value Inculcation Through Vipassana' workshop

(For school and college teachers): 15 May (10 a.m.) to 29 May (5 p.m.). ATs can attend from 26 to 29 May.

Dhamma Sikhara, Dharamshala (H.P.)

'Value Inculcation Through Vipassana' workshop (For school and college teachers): 1 June to 15 June.

Dhamma Kota, Rajkot (Gujarat)

Workshop: 4 June (evening) to 6 June (evening) for ATs, Dhamma workers, and trustees.

Dhamma Setu, Chennai (Tamil Nadu)

Children Course Workshop: 29 July to 30 July.

AT Workshop: 12 August to 15 August.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

Vipassana Research Institute is planning to compile a digital catalogue of Asokan edicts or pillars. Meditators are requested to report any edicts or pillars in their area because there is a possibility that some Asokan edicts and pillars are yet to be identified.

GOENKAJI'S INTERVIEW ON ZEE TV

Zee TV is broadcasting a program called *Urja* featuring Goenkaji **every Friday at 12:00 noon**. In this program, Goenkaji answers questions about the different aspects of Dhamma (Dharma). Meditators may inform their family and friends about the opportunity to hear Goenkaji expound on the universal Dhamma.

Questions for Goenkaji may be sent to: *Urja*, Zee TV, Post Box No. 1, Andheri (W), Mumbai 400 099.

Email: response@zeenetwork.com

(Please put 'Urja' in the subject line.)

Anapana Course For Visually Challenged Children

A one-day Anapana course was organised for students of the Government Blind School at Nashik Road on 8th February 2004. The twenty-seven students who took part in the course said that they had benefited from the course. Later, they sent their feedback in Braille. There will be regular group meditation for these students in their school.

CHANGE IN RESPONSIBILITIES

Ācaryas

Mr. Sher Singh & Mrs. Vimala Kumari Jain

To assist the area teacher in serving Dhamma Thali, Jaipur and to serve Jail courses in Rajasthan

NEW RESPONSIBILITIES

Senior Assistant Teachers

Mr. T. Madhusudan Prasad, *Hyderabad*

Mr. M. A. Siva Subramanian, *Madurai*

Mr. Van Shafer, *USA*

NEW APPOINTMENTS

Assistant Teachers

1. Mr. Sigita Baltramaitis, *Lithuania*

2. Mr. Christian & Mrs. Rosi Hild, *Switzerland*

3. Ms. Nancy Rosen, *Canada*

Children's Course Teachers

1. Mr. Anil Pandarinath Mali, *Jalgaon*

2. Mrs. Pushpa Subhashcandra Zaware, *Jalgaon*

3. Dr. Deepak Dodhu Narkhede, *Jalgaon*

4. Mrs. Deepa Deepak Narkhede, *Jalgaon*

5. Mr. Prakash Khernar, *Burhanpur (M. P.)*

6. Ms. Jyotika Sharma, *Bhatechh (H. P.)*

8. Dr. Krishna Vasudevan &

9. Mrs. Chitra Krishna, *Chennai*

10. Ms. Ruchi Bajaj, *Chennai*

11. Mr. Jonathan Mirin &

12. Mrs. Godlieve Richard, *USA*

13. Mr. Adam Shepard &

14. Mrs. Rebecca Shepard, *USA*

15. Mr. Lee Roberts, *USA*

16. Mr. Jayde Lin-Roberts, *USA*

17. Ms. Laura Bruggeman, *USA*

18. Ms. Marta van Patten, *USA*

19. Mr. Eric Sedlacek, *USA*

20. Mr. Josh McEwen, *USA*

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