



WORDS OF DHAMMA

*Yato yato sammāsati,
khandhna udayabbaya;
Labhatī pītipāmojjaṃ,
amatam taṃ vijānataṃ.*

— Dhammapada- 374, Bhikkhuvagga.

Whenever one is aware of the arising and passing away of the aggregates, one finds rapture and joy. This to the wise is the way to the deathless (Nibbāna).

The Essentials of Buddha-Dhamma in Meditative Practice

by Thray Sithu Sayagyi U Ba Khin

Several years before he died, Sayagyi composed the following discourse in English, particularly for his Western students. He read it to students on a number of occasions. After his death, the discourse was transcribed from an audio recording, and published under the above title.

Anicca, dukkha and anattā are the three essential elements in the Buddha's teaching.

If you know *anicca* (impermanence) truly, you know *dukkha* (suffering) also as a sequel and *anattā* (no-self) as ultimate truth. It takes time to understand the three together. *Anicca* is, of course, the essential fact which must be first experienced and understood by practice. Mere book-knowledge of the Buddha-Dhamma will not be enough for the understanding of true *anicca* because the experiential aspect will be missing. It is only through experiential understanding of the nature of *anicca* as an ever-changing process within your very self that you can understand *anicca* in the way the Buddha would like you to understand it. As in the days of the Buddha, so too now, this understanding of *anicca* can be developed by persons who have no book-knowledge whatsoever of the teachings of the Buddha.

To understand *anicca*, one must follow strictly and diligently the Eightfold Noble Path, which is divided into the three steps of *sīla*, *samādhi* and *paññā* – morality, concentration and wisdom. *Sīla* or virtuous living is the basis for *samādhi*, that is, control of the mind to one-pointedness. It is only when *samādhi* is good that one can develop *paññā*. Therefore, *sīla* and *samādhi* are the prerequisites for *paññā*. By *paññā* is meant the understanding of *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anattā* through the practice of Vipassana meditation.

Whether a Buddha has arisen or not, the practice of *sīla* and *samādhi* are present in the world of mankind. They are, in fact, the common denominators of all religious faiths. They are not, however, sufficient means for the goal of the Buddha's teaching – the complete end of suffering. In his search for the end of suffering, Prince Siddhārtha, the future Buddha, found this out and worked his way through to find the path which would lead to the end of suffering. After solid work for six years, he found the way out, became completely enlightened, and then taught men and gods to follow the path which would lead them to the end of suffering.

In this connection, I should like to explain that each action, whether by deed, word or thought, leaves behind a force of action called *saṅkhāra* or *kamma* in popular terminology, which goes to the credit or debit account of the individual, according to whether the action is good or bad. There is, therefore, an accumulation of *saṅkhāras* or *kamma* with everyone, which functions as the supply-source of energy to sustain life, which is inevitably followed by suffering and death. It is by the development of the power inherent in the understanding of *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anattā* that one is able to rid oneself of the

saṅkhāras accumulated in one's own personal account. This process begins with the true understanding of *anicca* while further accumulations of fresh actions and the reduction of the supply of energy to sustain life are taking place simultaneously, from moment to moment and from day to day. It is, therefore, a matter of a whole lifetime or more to get rid of all one's *saṅkhāras*. He who has rid himself of all *saṅkhāras* comes to the end of suffering, for then no *saṅkhāra* remains to give the necessary energy to sustain him in any form of life. On the termination of their lives the perfected saints, the Buddhas and the Arahants, pass into *Parinibbāna*, reaching the end of suffering. For us of today who take to Vipassana meditation it would suffice if we can understand *anicca* well enough to reach the first stage of an *Ariya* (Noble person), that is, a *sotāpanna* or stream-enterer, who will not take more than seven lives to come to the end of suffering.

This *anicca*, which opens the door to the understanding of *dukkha* and *anattā* and eventually to the end of suffering, can be encountered only through a Buddha, or after he has passed away his teachings, for as long as those aspects relating to the Eightfold Noble Path and the Thirty-Seven Factors of Enlightenment (*bodhipakkhiya dhammā*) remain intact and available to the aspirant.

For progress in Vipassana meditation, a student must keep knowing *anicca* as continuously as possible. The Buddha's advice to monks is that they should try to maintain the awareness of *anicca*, or *dukkha* or *anattā* in all postures, whether sitting, or standing, or walking or lying down. The continuity of awareness of *anicca*, and so of *dukkha* and *anattā*, is the secret of success. The last words of the Buddha just before he breathed his last and passed away into *Mahāparinibbāna* were: “*Vaya-dhamma saṅkhra. Appamdena sampdetha.*” “Decay or *anicca* is inherent in all component things. Work out your own salvation with diligence.” This is, in fact, the essence of all his teachings during the forty-five years he taught. If you will keep up the awareness of the *anicca* that is inherent in all component things, you are sure to reach the goal in the course of time.

As you develop in the understanding of *anicca*, your insight into “what is true of nature” will become greater and greater, so that eventually you will have no doubt whatsoever of the three characteristics of *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anattā*. It is then only that you will be in a position to go ahead for the goal in view. Now that you know *anicca* as the first essential factor, you should try to understand what *anicca* is with real clarity, as extensively as possible, so as not to get confused in the course of practice or discussion.

The real meaning of *anicca* is that impermanence or decay is the inherent nature of everything that exists in the universe – whether animate or inanimate. The Buddha taught his disciples that everything that exists at the material level is composed of ‘*kalāpas*’. *Kalāpas* are material units very much smaller than atoms, which die out almost immediately after they come into being. Each *kalāpa* is a mass formed of the eight basic constituents of matter: solid, liquid, heat and motion, together with colour, odour, taste, and nutriment. The first four are called primary qualities and are predominant in a *kalāpa*. The other four are subsidiaries dependent upon and arising from the former. A *kalāpa* is the minutest particle in the physical plane – still beyond the

range of science today. It is only when the eight basic material constituents unite together that the *kalāpa* is formed. In other words, the momentary coexistence of these eight nature elements of behaviour, which makes a mass just for that moment, is known as a *kalāpa*. The life-span of a *kalāpa* is termed a “moment,” and a trillion such moments are said to elapse during the wink of a man’s eye. These *kalāpas* are all in a state of perpetual change or flux. To a developed student in Vipassana meditation, they can be felt as a stream of energy.

The human body is not, as it may appear, a solid stable entity, but a continuum of matter (*rūpa*) coexisting with mind (*nāma*). To know that our body is tiny *kalāpas* all in a state of change is to know what is true of the nature of change or decay. This change or decay, *anicca*, occasioned by the continual breakdown and replacement of *kalāpas*, all in a state of combustion, must necessarily be identified as *dukkha*, the truth of suffering. It is only when you experience impermanence as suffering that you come to the realization of the truth of suffering, the first of the Four Noble Truths basic to the teaching of the Buddha.

Why? Because when you realize the subtle nature of *dukkha* from which you cannot escape for a moment, you become truly afraid of, disgusted with, and disinclined to continue your very existence as mind and matter (*nāma-rūpa*), and look for a way of escape to a state beyond *dukkha*, and so to *Nibbāna*, the end of suffering. What that end of suffering is like, you will be able to taste, even as a human being, when you reach the level of a *sotāpanna*, a stream-enterer, and are developed well enough by practice to go into the unconditioned state of *Nibbāna*, the peace within. But even in terms of everyday, ordinary life, no sooner than you are able to keep up the awareness of *anicca* in practice will you know for yourself that a change is taking place in you for the better, both physically and mentally.

Before entering upon the practice of Vipassana meditation, that is, after *samādhi* has been developed to a proper level, a student should acquaint himself with the theoretical knowledge of *rūpa* (matter) and *nāma* (mind and mental properties). If he has understood these well in theory and has come to the proper level of *samādhi*, there is every likelihood of his understanding *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anattā* in the true sense of the words of the Buddha. For in Vipassana meditation one observes not only the changing nature, *anicca*, of *rūpa* or matter but also the changing nature, *anicca*, of *nāma*, that is thought-elements of attention directed towards the process of change of *rūpa* or matter. At times the attention will be focused upon *anicca* of *rūpa* only. At other times upon *anicca* in regard to *nāma*. When one is observing the impermanence of matter, one realizes also that the thought-elements arising simultaneously with that awareness are also in a state of transition or change. In this case, one will be knowing *anicca* in regard to both *rūpa* and *nāma* together.

All I have said so far relates to the understanding of *anicca* through bodily feeling of the process of change of *rūpa* (or matter) and also of thought-elements depending upon such changing processes. You should know that *anicca* can also be understood through other types of feeling as well. *Anicca* can be developed through feeling:

1. by contact of visible form with the sense organ of the eye;
2. by contact of sound with the sense organ of the ear;
3. by contact of smell with the sense organ of the nose;
4. by contact of taste with the sense organ of the tongue;
5. by contact of touch with the sense organ of the body;
6. and by contact of mental objects with the sense organ of the mind.

One can thus develop the understanding of *anicca* through any of the six sense organs. In practice, however, we have found that of all types of feeling, the feeling by contact of touch with the component parts of the body in a process of change, covers the widest area for introspective meditation. Not only that, the feeling by contact of touch (by way of friction, radiation and vibration of the *kalāpas* within) with the component parts of the body is more tangible than other types of feeling. Therefore a beginner in Vipassana meditation can come to the understanding of *anicca* more easily through bodily feeling of the nature of change of *rūpa*, or matter. This is the main reason why we have chosen bodily feeling as a medium for quick understanding of *anicca*. It is open to anyone to try other means, but my suggestion is that one should be well-established in the understanding of *anicca* through bodily feeling before any attempt is made through other types of feeling.

There are ten levels of knowledge in Vipassana, namely:

1. *sammasana*: theoretical appreciation of *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anattā* by close observation and analysis.
2. *udayabbaya*: knowledge of the arising and dissolution of *rūpa* and *nāma* by direct observation.
3. *bhaṅga*: knowledge of the rapidly changing nature of *rūpa* and *nāma* as a swift current or stream of energy;
4. *bhaya*: knowledge that this very existence is dreadful.
5. *ādīnava*: knowledge that this very existence is full of evils.
6. *nibbidā*: knowledge that this very existence is disgusting.
7. *muñcītakamyatā*: knowledge of the urgent need and wish to escape from this very existence.
8. *paṭisaṅkhā*: knowledge that the time has come to work for full realization of deliverance with *anicca* as the base.
9. *sāṅkhārupekkhā*: knowledge that the stage is now set to get detached from all conditioned phenomena (*saṅkhāra*) and to break away from egocentricity.
10. *anuloma*: knowledge that would accelerate the attempt to reach the goal.

These are the levels of attainment which one goes through during the course of Vipassana meditation. In the case of those who reach the goal in a short time, they can be known only in retrospect. Along with one’s progress in understanding *anicca*, one may reach these levels of attainment; subject, however, to adjustments or help at certain levels by a competent teacher. One should avoid looking forward to such attainments in anticipation, as this will distract from the continuity of awareness of *anicca* which alone can and will give the desired reward.

Let me now deal with Vipassana meditation from the point of view of a householder in everyday life and explain the benefit one can derive from it, here and now, in this very lifetime. The initial object of Vipassana meditation is to activate *anicca* in oneself and eventually to reach a state of inner and outer calmness and balance. This is achieved when one becomes engrossed in the feeling of *anicca* within. The world is now facing serious problems which threaten all mankind. It is just the right time for everyone to take to Vipassana meditation and learn how to find a deep pool of quiet in the midst of all that is happening today. *Anicca* is inside of everybody. It is within reach of everybody. Just a look into oneself and there it is – *anicca* to be experienced. When one can feel *anicca*, when one can experience *anicca*, and when one can become engrossed in *anicca*, one can at will cut oneself off from the world of ideation outside. *Anicca* is, for the householder, the gem of life which he will treasure to create a reservoir of calm and balanced energy for his own wellbeing and for the welfare of the society.

The experience of *anicca*, when properly developed, strikes at the root of one’s physical and mental ills and removes gradually whatever is bad in him, that is the causes of such physical and mental ills. This experience is not reserved for men who have renounced the world for the homeless life. It is for the householder as well. In spite of drawbacks which make a householder restless in these days, a competent teacher or guide can help a student to get the experience of *anicca* activated in a comparatively short time. Once he has got it activated, all that is necessary is for him to try to preserve it; but he must make it a point, as soon as time or opportunity presents itself for further progress, to work for the stage of *bhaṅgañāna* (knowledge of dissolution). If one reaches this level there will be little or no problem because he will be able to experience *anicca* without much ado and almost automatically. In this case *anicca* shall become his base, for returning to as soon as the domestic needs of daily life, all physical and mental activities, are over.

However, there is likely to be some difficulty for one who has not reached the stage of *bhaṅga*. It will be just like a tug-of-war for him between *anicca* within, and physical and mental activities outside. So it would be wise for him to follow the motto of “Work while you work, play while you play.” There is no need for him to be activating the experience of *anicca* all the time. It should suffice if this could be confined to a regular period, or periods, set apart in the day or night for the purpose. During this time, at least, an attempt must be made to keep the attention focused inside the body, with awareness devoted exclusively to *anicca*. That is to say, this awareness of *anicca* should

be from moment to moment, or so continuous as not to allow for the interpolation of any discursive or distracting thoughts, which are definitely detrimental to progress. In case this is not possible, he will have to go back to respiration-mindfulness, because *samādhi* is the key to the understanding of *anicca*. To get good *samādhi*, *sīla* has to be perfect, since *samādhi* is built upon *sīla*. For a good experience of *anicca*, *samādhi* must be good. If *samādhi* is excellent, awareness of *anicca* will also become excellent.

There is no special technique for activating the experience of *anicca* other than the use of the mind set to a perfect state of balance and attention projected upon the object of meditation. In Vipassana the object of meditation is *anicca*, and therefore in the case of those used to focusing their attention on bodily feelings (sensations), they can feel *anicca* directly. In experiencing *anicca* on or in the body, it should first be in the area where one can easily get his attention engrossed, changing the area of attention from place to place, from head to feet and from feet to head, at times probing into the interior. At this stage, it must clearly be understood that no attention is to be paid to the anatomy of the body, but to the formations of matter (*kalāpas*) and the nature of their constant change.

If these instructions are observed, there will surely be progress, but the progress depends also on *pāramī* (one's disposition for certain spiritual qualities) and devotion of the individual to the work of meditation. As he attains higher levels of knowledge, his power to understand the three characteristics of *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anattā* will increase and he will accordingly come nearer and nearer to the goal of the *Ariya* – which every householder should keep in view.

This is the age of science. Man of today has no utopia. He will not accept anything unless the results are good, concrete, vivid, personal, and here-and-now.

When the Buddha was alive, he said to the people of Kālāma:

“Now look, you Kālāmas. Be not misled by report or tradition or hearsay. Be not misled by proficiency in the scriptural collections, or by reasoning or logic, or reflection on and approval of some theory, or because some view conforms with one's inclinations, or out of respect for the prestige of a teacher. But when you know for yourselves: these things are unwholesome, these things are blameworthy, these things are censured by the wise; these things, when practised and observed, conduce to loss and sorrow – then do you reject them. But if at any time you know for yourselves: these things are wholesome, these things are blameless, these things are praised by the intelligent; these things, when practised and observed, conduce to welfare and happiness; then, Kālāmas, do you, having practised them, abide therein.”

The time clock of Vipassana is now struck – that is, for the revival of Buddha-Dhamma, Vipassana in practice. We have no doubt whatsoever that definite results would accrue to those who would with an open mind sincerely undergo a course of training under a competent teacher. I mean results which will be accepted as good, concrete, vivid, personal, and here-and-now, results which will keep them in good stead and in a state of well-being and happiness for the rest of their lives.

May all beings be happy. May peace prevail in this world.

A Portion of the President's Address

... On the occasion of the Gratitude Day on 14th Jan. 2018 at the Global Vipassana Pagoda Shri Ramnath Kovind, President of India recalled that as soon as he entered the campus many of his old memories became fresh: “Exactly two years ago in the last week of December I came here. Prior to this, I had spoken with Mataji on the phone. At that time I was the Governor of Bihar. During that conversation she invited me to visit the Pagoda and said that I would very much enjoy the experience. So with this inspiration, I came here. Shortly after that I came to know that Mataji, was ill and had been hospitalized. So the following day I made a program to go to the hospital, thinking that I must see this person at whose invitation I had visited the Pagoda. When I went to the hospital the following day all the members of her family were present. Respected Mataji was lying apparently asleep on her bed. But as I paid my respect to her

somebody told her I had come. When she heard these words she opened her eyes to see that the person whom she had invited to visit the Pagoda was there. Today my heart melts to remember this. Paying respects to her memory I stand before you today.

We all know that the place at which we have assembled here is connected with spirituality. About 15 or 16 years ago I got an opportunity to learn the technique of practicing Vipassana meditation. Therefore I feel very happy today to once again come to the Vipassana Pagoda to express my gratitude to the great stalwarts like Sayagi U Ba Khin, Vipassanacarya S.N. Goenka and Mataji. I also feel happy to have laid the foundation of “Dhammālaya-2”

I had an occasion to meet with Goenkaji for just 10 to 15 minutes in Delhi where a one-day course had been organised. It was the winter season and we were all sitting in the sun. At that time I was a member of the Rajya Sabha. In that interview with Guruji, I came to realize that he was greatly concerned for those who work in the social and political fields. They meet persons, hear their grievances and sometimes they become agitated and lose their cool and peace of mind. How could they be happy and peaceful in such adverse circumstances? If, however, they were to practice Vipassana meditation, they would understand the art of living and know how to remain calm and cool in such troubling situations. They would be able to solve their problems in an effective manner. I did not know, of course, that this was to be my only interview with him. But it is still fresh in my memory. I consider myself fortunate to have had an opportunity to meet him. I think that Vipassana meditation benefits all who practice it. I wish that this foundation may become successful in implementing schemes for the well-being of the people. Jai Hind!”

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Additional

Responsibilities

1. Shri Kumar Pandian, To assist Center Teacher in serving Dhamma Marudhara, Jodhpur
2. Mr. Brian Clive Wagner, to assist Center Teacher in serving Dhamma Pattaka, South Africa and the Southern Region from Angola to Mozambique.
2. Mrs Pradnya Shirsat Nashik
3. Mr Saurabh Chavan Nashik
4. Mr. Prem Singh Shakya Etah UP
5. Mr Vummidi Lakshminarayana Hyderabad
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8. Ms. Jhansi Rani M Hyderabad
9. Mr Prasad V. Hyderabad
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12. Mrs Sweta Shah Vadodara
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14. Mrs Raksha Vyas Vadodara
15. Mr Siddhartha Shah Vadodara
16. Mr Atul Shah Vadodara
17. Ms. Chou Yi- Xian Tiawan
18. and 19 Mr Martin and Mrs Claudia Kaufmann Austria
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26. Wai Yan Yun Myanmar
27. Ma Chwe Kay Khaing Myanmar

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1. Mr. S Ganesan, Chennai
2. Mrs. Janaki Subramaniam, Kalpakkam, TN
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Newly Appointed Assistant Teachers

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New Rcccs

1. Mr Khoo Hong Eng Malaysia
2. Ms. Lyna Som Cambodia
3. U Tin Aung Myanmar
4. Daw Khin Myint May Myanmar

Children's Meditation Courses in Mumbai

Registration before Course Thursday and Friday.

Other places as under:

Date	Course site
First Sunday	Ulhasnagar, Wadala, Khar
Second Sunday	Dombivili, Andheri
Third Sunday	Ghatkopar, Goregaon
Fourth Sunday	Airoli, Kalyan

(Age 10-16 Registration 2 days before Course)

"Please call or send a text SMS message with the name & age of the child two days in advance for registration"

Course Timing: 8:30 am to 2:30 pm. **Registration Timing:** 11 am to 1 pm on the specified numbers and dates for each location. **Course Venues:** **Goregaon:** Vipassana Counselling and Research Centre, Siddharth Municipal General Hospital, Goregaon (W), Mob. 98924-15803, Tel: 2624-2025. **Ulhasnagar:** A Block 703/1405, Gokul Nagar, Behind Netaji School, Near Mahesh Granite, Tel. 9970755130, **Wadala:** "BMC School – Sewri Wadala Estate Road No: 7A Behind Lijjat Papad Building **Contact:** Mobile: 98922-18186, 98201-50336, **Khar:** Mahabodhi Buddha Vihar, Baudha Smashan Bhumi, Carter Rd. Danda, Khar West, Mumbai-52, Mob. 9930962652, 9869281410, **Dombivili:** Tilak School, Tilak Nagar, Dombivili, Mob. 9029423540. **Andheri:** Mayfair Meridian Meditation Hall, Ceaser Road, Off S.V. Road, Amboli, Near St. Blaise Mob. 9967480865, 9967813478. **Ghatkopar:** SNDT School, New Building, Cama Lane, Ghatkopar (W), Opp Vidyut Society, Mumbai 400086. Tel: 25011096, 25162505. **Airoli:** Dnyandeep School, sector 2, Airoli, Mobile: 9969267720, 9969950901. **Kalyan:** Krishanrao Dhulup KDM school No. 4, Ram baug lane no 5, Near old Vani Vidyalay. Mob. 9987425633. -- Please call two days in advance for registration. **NB:** *Please bring a cushion. *Please register on the specified phone numbers. If unable to attend after registration, please *Inform in advance. *Please arrive on time for the course.

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Foundation of Dhammalaya 2**Laid by Shri Ramnath Kovind – President of India**

To give free accommodation to Dhamma Sevakas and meditators who come here for a one-day course from far-off places Dhammalaya-2 will be constructed. Those who want to earn merit by contributing to the construction work should contact– 1. Mr. Derik Pegado, or 2. Sri Bipin Mehta, (details as in Archives Center). Email: audits@globalpagoda.org

Importance of Lighting a Pagoda

Respected Goenkaji always said that it is of special importance that any Pagoda where relics are kept be well lit throughout the night. This helps maintain the Dhamma atmosphere. Anyone wishing to donate for the lighting of the Global Pagoda in the name of their near and dear ones may do so. The cost per night is Rs. 5000/-. For further information **Contact:** 1. Mr. Derik Pegado, 9921227057. or 2. Sri Bipin Mehta, Mo. 9920052156, Email: audits@globalpagoda.org

One-day Mega course schedule at Global Vipassana Pagoda for 2018

Sunday 29 April, Buddha Purnima; Sunday 29th July, Ashadha-Purnima (Dharmachakka Pravartan day); Sunday 30 September in Gratitude of Respected S.N. Goenka (29th Sept.) & Sharad Purnima. One-day mega course at **GVP** onwards till 4 pm. Non-meditators may participate in the 3 pm discourse. Please come only with prior registration. **Samaggānaṃ tapo sukho:** Avail of the immense benefit of meditating in large group. For registration **Contact:** 022-62427544, 022-28451170 Extn: 9, Mob. 8291894644 (Tel booking: 11 am to 5 pm daily). **Online registration:** www.oneday.globalpagoda.org.

DHAMMA DOHA

*Bāhara bāhara bhaṭakate, dukkhiyā rahā jahāna.
Antaramana meṇ khoja tī, sukha kī khāna khadāna.*

Always straying outward, the world remains miserable.
By searching the depths of the mind, you tap the
treasure-lode of happiness.

*Hoṣa jage jaba Dharma kā, hove dūra pramāda.
Svadarśana karate huye, cakhe mukti kā svāda.*

When the clarity of Dhamma arises, confusion is
dispelled. Having observed yourself, you taste the savour
of liberation.

*Naye karama bāndhe nahīn, kṣīṇa purātana hoyā.
Kṣāṇa kṣāṇa jāgrata hī rahe, sahaja mukta hai soya.*

Do not generate new *kamma*, eradicate the old, every
moment remain vigilant, and naturally you will become
liberated.

*Dekha dekha kara citta kī, granthi sulajhatī jāya.
Jāge vimala Vipāśyanā, citta mukta ho jāya.*

Observe the mind steadfastly to disentangle its knots.
May pure Vipassana arise to liberate the mind.

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