

# VIPASSANA MEDITATION RETREAT

Vipassana-bhavana

by

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## **Introduction**

The meaning of **Vipassana** is an Introspection (a look into one's own mind, feelings, observation and analysis of oneself, Self-examination, self-analysis, rumination, meditation, contemplation, soul-searching, self-questioning), Insight that totally purifies the mind. **It is an insight into the impermanent nature of mind and body.**

**Vipassana-bhavana** is a systematic development of insight through the meditation technique of observing the reality of oneself by observing sensations within the body with the wisdom arising from seeing the truth as it is (**Yathabhutanadessana**).

## **Happiness Through Right Understanding**

Sentient being, almost everybody in this world wants happiness and peace. This is the main reason why people are seeking the true path, which leads them to the cessation of suffering. Today, we are gathered (assembled) together here in

**Rupasingha Rukkha Vimana meditation center** in **Nugegoda**, in **Sri Lanka** because we want to seek the real happiness and peace for this life (and next to follow). All kinds of religions in the world arise because of this search and desire for real happiness and peace. One great religion in the world is

Buddhism. Buddhism or Teachings of the Buddha shows us how to achieve that happiness and peace by following the path to the cessation of suffering.

## The cause of Suffering (Paticca-samuppada)

The Buddha discovered the path leading to the cessation of **suffering (dukkha)**. According to the Buddha's teachings, everything arises dependent on conditions. **Everything in the world has its cause; nothing arises without a cause.** When the Buddha wanted to get rid of suffering, he had to find out the cause. When the cause has been found and eradicated (eliminated, exterminated), that cause ceases to exist. When the Buddha achieved enlightenment, He discovered that **the cause of suffering is attachment (Tanha)**. So, He uttered this verse-

**Anekajati samsaram, Santavisam anibbisam....**

The word **Tanha** means greed, lust, desire, and craving. We can translate that **Tanha** into English as an attachment. So, that word **Tanha** covers all forms of desire.

So, **Tanha**, he said, is the cause of suffering. When there is **Tanha**, there is **dukkha** (suffering). Only when a man can eliminate **Tanha**, he or she can get rid of **dukkha**. This **Tanha** also arises dependent on a cause. Without a cause, **Tanha** will not arise. **Tanha** is a mental state and a mental process, which is conditioned. The Buddha discovered that **the cause of attachment is due to having a wrong view**. That is the false view of a soul, a self, an **I** or a **you**, a personality or an individuality known as **Sakkaya-ditthi** or **atta-ditthi**. So this **sakkaya-ditthi** or **atta-ditthi** is the cause of **Tanha**, which causes **dukkha**. Then what is the cause of this false view?

The Buddha pointed out that **ignorance of the natural mental and physical processes is the primary cause of the false view of a soul or a self**. Therefore, by realization of right understanding of this dual process in its true nature, we can exterminate ignorance. Then we come to know **the Law of Cause and Effect (Paticca samuppada)**. Thus, we can summarize the chain of cause and effect like this:-

1. **Ignorance** is the cause, **false view** is the effect
2. **False view** is the cause, **attachment** is the effect
3. **Attachment** is the cause, **suffering** is the effect

Now, we come to know: if mental and physical processes are rightly understood, meaning we have thus embrace the right view and that right understanding (eradicate) could *do away with* ignorance. When ignorance has been eradicated, then there will not be any more false view of a soul, a self, a person or a being. When this false view has been destroyed, there will not arise any attachment at all. When attachment has been destroyed, there will not arise any suffering. Then we achieve a stage in which all kinds of sufferings cease to exist- the cessation of suffering (**Nirodha.sacca**) is attained.

## **The Cause of False View**

Let us see how ignorance of the mind-body processes causes false view of a soul or a self, a person or a being, an I or a you ; and how this false view causes attachment to arise. It is because we do not rightly understand this dual process in its true nature that we consider it as a person or a being, a soul or a self. Then that person, that being, that I or that you has a desire to be rich or to be a king or a queen, a president or prime minister of Sri Lanka or whatever country. This desire to be a king, a queen or a president...is attachment. It arises through the false idea of a person or a being, a soul or a self, an I or a you .

**If we want to eradicate this desire or attachment, then we must destroy its cause.** What is the cause of attachment? **The cause of desire or attachment is the false view** or false concept of a person or a being, a soul or a self. So when the false view has been destroyed, there will not arise any attachment to become a rich man, a king and so on. The desire to get, to have something arises through false view or the false concept of a person or being, an I or a you . When that desire or attachment arises in us, it brings about all kinds of suffering.

[When we are attached to our house, a non-living thing, we are worried about our house. If our house is on fire, we feel sad. Sadness is one of the main kinds of suffering. That suffering is caused by our attachment to our house.]

Then again, when we are attached to our relatives, to our friends to our kids and so on; that attachment also causes us to suffer. When we are attached to those things or persons, we worry about those things. This suffering is mental suffering or mental dukkha, and is caused by attachment. So, attachment is the cause of suffering. **Where does this attachment come from? This attachment comes**

**from the false conception of bodily and mental processes as a person or a being, a soul or a self, an I or a you .**

When this concept of personality and individuality has been destroyed, there will not be any attachment. When there is no attachment, there will not be any suffering. (**Tanhakhayo nibbanan ti pavuccati.**)

## **See them as they really are**

The Buddha pointed out that by being mindful of this dual process (mental and physical characteristic of nature) as it really is, we are able to rightly understand its intrinsic (essential) nature. When we want to understand something as it really is, we should observe it, watch it, be mindful of it, as it really occurs without analyzing it, without logical reasoning, without philosophical thinking and without preconception. We should be very attentive and mindful of it as it really is.

When we want to rightly understand the mind-body processes in their true nature or as they really are, we must not analyze them or think about them. We must not reason or use any intellectual knowledge, or any preconceived (predetermined) idea. We must leave them aside and pay bare attention to what is happening to the mind-body phenomena as they really are. Then we can see our mind-body processes as they really are. When our body feels hot, we should note that feeling of heat as heat.

*When the body feels cold, we should not it as cold. When we feel pain, we should note it as pain. When we feel happy, we should note that happiness. When we feel angry, we should note that anger as anger. When we feel sorrow, we should be mindful of it as sorrow. When we feel sad or disappointed, we should be aware of our emotional state of sadness or disappointed as it is.*

Each and every mental and physical process must be mindfully observed as it really occurs so that we can rightly understand it in its true nature. That right understanding will lead us to do away with ignorance. **When ignorance has been removed, then we do not take the mind-body processes to be a person, a being, a soul or a self.** If we take these mind-body processes to be just natural processes, then there will not arise any attachment. When the attachment has

been destroyed, we are free from all kinds of suffering and thus have attained the cessation of suffering. **So, mindfulness of mind-body processes in their true nature is the way leading to the cessation of suffering.** That is the way the Buddha delivered the discourse on **The Four Foundations of Mindfulness** .

In this great discourse, the Buddha teaches us to be mindful of mental and physical phenomena as they really are. There are many ways by which we have to be mindful of the mind-body process but they can be summarized four in number.

1. **Mindfulness of bodily process** [kayanupassana Satipatthana]
2. **Mindfulness of feeling or sensation** [Vedananupassana Satipatthana]
3. **Mindfulness of consciousness** [Cittanupassana Satipatthana] and
4. **Mindfulness of mind-objects** [Dhammanupassana Satipatthana]

## **Choice of Awareness**

When we are mindful of our mind-body processes, we do not need to choose any mental or physical process as the object of our meditation. Why? The mind will choose the object by itself. If we choose any mental or physical process as the object of meditation, it means we are attached to it. **During meditation, the noting mind or the observing mind will choose the object by itself; perhaps a feeling of happiness for our success, or a painful sensation, or the abdominal movement.** Though we try to focus the mind on the abdominal movement, the mind does not stay with it if the pain is more distinct. The noting mind will go to the pain and observe it because the more distinct feeling takes the mind towards it very strongly. **So, we need not choose the object but should observe the object that the mind chooses.** When pain disappears through attentive and close awareness, the mind will then choose another object, which is more distinct.



**For example,**

***If an itchy sensation on the back is more distinct than the abdominal movement, the mind will go to the feeling of itchiness and observe it as itching, itching, and itching .***

***When the itchy sensation has disappeared by means of strong mindfulness and deep concentration, the mind will choose (for example) the abdominal movement as its object because it is more distinct than the other objects.***

***If happiness is more distinct than the abdominal movement, the mind will choose happiness as its object and observe it as happy, happy, happy .***

So, the principle of Vapassana meditation or mindfulness meditation is to observe, to watch, or to be mindful of all mental or physical phenomena as they really are. This mindfulness meditation is not only very simple and easy, but also very effective in achieving our goal-to achieve the cessation of suffering.

Suppose! when we are taking food, we should be aware of every action, every activity involved in the act of eating. When we stretch out our arm, we must be aware of the movement of stretching. When the hand touches the spoon or the rice, the touching sensation must be observed. When we hold the spoon, the sensation of holding must be observed. When we dip the spoon into the curry, that dipping movement must be observed. When we scoop curry with the spoon, that movement must be observed as scooping, scooping.

In this way, each and every action involved in the act of eating must be observed as it is because every physical process must be thoroughly realized so as to remove ignorance, which is the cause of false view. In the some way, while we are working in the office or at home; while we are taking a bath, we must be aware of all the actions or movements involved. When practicing walking meditation in a retreat, the movements of the foot such as the lifting movement, the pushing movement, and the dropping movement must be closely and precisely observed as they really are.



## Labeling or naming of the object of Meditation:

We may need labeling or naming when we are mindful of any object. When we lift our foot to walk, we should label it as lifting . When we push it and when we drop it, we should label it as dropping . In this way,

Lifting, Pushing, Dropping; Lifting, Pushing, Dropping . Why? Such a labeling or naming can lead the mind to the object of meditation closely and precisely. It is also very helpful for a yogi to focus his or her mind on the object of meditation. However, there may be some yogis who need not label or name the object of meditation. Instead, they just observe it. They should just observe the movement of the foot—from the very beginning of the lifting movement up to the end of the dropping movement. The mind must follow the movement of the foot very closely as it is, without thinking or analyzing. In this way, yogi can develop concentration more deeply than ever.

At the beginning of the practice, the mind used to wanders very often. Whenever the mind wanders, you should follow the mind and observe it. If you are thinking about your family affairs, that thought must be observed as it is, making a mental note, Thinking, Thinking, Thinking. After the initial thought has disappeared, you should restart your walking and noting as usual—Lifting, pushing, dropping , Lifting, pushing, dropping .

## Samatha and Vipassana:

It is important to know the difference between **Samatha** meditation and **Vipassana** meditation. **Samatha** means concentration, calmness, and tranquility. When the mind is deeply concentrated on the object of meditation, the mind becomes calm and tranquil. **The purpose of Samatha meditation is to attain deep concentration of the mind on a single object. So the result of**

**Samatha meditation is the attainment of deep concentration such as absorption concentration (Appana-samadhi, jhana) or access concentration (Upacara-samadhi).** When the mind is deeply concentrated on the object of meditation, all the defilements such as lust, greed, hatred, desire, conceit, ignorance and so on are kept away from the mind which is absorbed in the object. When the mind is free from all defilements or hindrances, we feel calm, tranquil, happy and peaceful. The result of Samatha meditation, therefore, is acquiring some degree of happiness through the attainment of deep concentration such as absorption or access concentration but it does not enable us to rightly understand the mental and physical phenomena as they really are.

The purpose of **Vipassana meditation** is to attain the cessation of suffering through rightly understanding mental and physical processes in their true nature. For this, we need some degree of concentration. This concentration can be attained through **constant** and uninterrupted mindfulness of the mind-body process. Thus, we have a variety of objects of meditation: happiness is an object of meditation and so is anger, sorrow, painful sensation, stiffness, **numbness** (lack of sensation) and so on. Any mental or physical process can be the object of meditation.

**The purpose and the results of Samatha and Vipassana meditation are different, as are the methods.** The two divisions of Bhavana are development of tranquility (Samathabhavana), corresponding to concentration of the mind (Samadhi), and the development of Insight (Vipassanabhaavana), corresponding to wisdom (Panna). **Development of Samatha will lead to the states of mental absorption; development of Vipassana will lead to liberation.**

Once again, when we walk, we observe the movement of the foot- the lifting, pushing and dropping. At the beginning of the practice, our mind is not well concentrated on the foot. When the mind wanders, we have to follow it and observe it as it is until that wandering mind has disappeared. Only after it has disappeared, do we note the movement of the foot as usual. When the mind becomes well concentrated on the movement of the foot, what we note is the movement of the lifting, pushing and dropping and we must not be aware of the form of the foot or the form of the body during walking.

When the foot is lifted, the mind notes it as lifting, when the foot is pushed forward, the mind notes it as pushing, when the foot is dropped the mind notes it as dropping. When we come to realize them as natural processes of



movement, we also come to realize the mind that notes them. The lifting movement is one process and the mind that notes it is another process.

The pushing movement is one process and the mind that notes it is another process. In this way, we thoroughly realize the two processes of mental phenomena and physical phenomena. We rightly understand this dual process as just natural processes of mental and physical phenomena. We do not take them to be a person, a being, an I or a you. Then there will not arise any false concept of personality, individuality, soul, or self. When this false concept has been destroyed, there will not arise any attachment or desire, which is the cause of suffering. So, because attachment does not arise, there will not arise any dukkha, which is actually the result of the attachment. We attain the cessation of suffering at the moment of experiencing the process of the movement the lifting, pushing and dropping movement as just a natural process.

As we proceed (keep on into), our mindfulness becomes more constant, uninterrupted and powerful. As the mindfulness becomes constant and powerful, the concentration becomes deeper and stronger. When the concentration becomes deep and strong, then our realization or penetrating insight into mental processes and physical processes becomes clear. So we come to realize many series of lifting movements arising and passing away one after another, many series of pushing movement arising and passing away one after another and many series of dropping movements arising and passing away one after another. During such experience, we come to understand that no part of the process is permanent or everlasting. Every process of movement is subject to impermanence (**Anicca**) **arising and passing away very swiftly**, so it is not a good process; it is bad. Then we come to realize one of the three characteristics of the mental and physical process. When we realize the impermanent (**Anicca**) and suffering (**Dukkha**) nature of this physical process of movement, then we do not take it to be an everlasting entity- a person, a being, a soul or a self. This is the realization of the **Anatta**. So, we realize the three characteristics of mental and physical phenomena, impermanence (**Anicca**), suffering (**Dukkha**) and no-soul or no-self (**Anatta**).

## **Realization of the Four Noble Truths:**



In this manner, a yogi goes through all the stages of insight knowledge of mental and physical processes one after another. After the last stage has been reached, he or she has attained enlightenment of the First Path, **Sotapatti-magga**. At the moment of attaining the First Path the yogi (meditator) realizes the Four Noble Truths:-

- 7 **Dukkha-ariyasacca** The Noble Truth of Suffering,
- 7 **Samudaya-ariyasacca** The Noble Truth of the Cause of Suffering,
- 7 **Nirodha-ariyasacca** The Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering and
- 7 **Magga-ariyasacca** The Noble Truth of the Way Leading to the Cessation of Suffering.

When he or she realized the ever-changing phenomena of mental and physical, it means that he or she has realized the Truth of Suffering. AS a result, attachment, which is the cause of suffering, is removed and the meditator (yogi) has reached the state in which suffering ceases to exist. So, at the end of suffering, beyond that Tanha, there is a real happiness and peace what we called **Nibbanasuka**, the ultimate happiness.

May all Blessings of The Buddha, The Dhamma and The Samgha be upon you!

May all yogis in this **Nugegoda meditation center** be free from danger, all kinds of suffering and attain your final goal, Nibbana in this very life!

May all blessings of Triple Gems enable you to lead a happy and peaceful life forever and ever! (**Bhavatu sabbamangalam!**)

May all your Aspiration to gain happiness and peace be fulfilled in this very life.

May all Yogi's respond in – **Sadhu, Sadhu, Sadhu**

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# A Gift of Dhamma

## Verses 11 and 12

### The Story of Thera Sariputta

While residing at Veluvana, the Bamboo Grove monastery in Rajagaha, the Buddha uttered Verses (11) and (12) of this book, with reference to Sanjaya, a former teacher of the Chief Disciples, the Venerable Sariputta and the Venerable Moggallana (formerly Upatissa and Kolita).

Upatissa and Kolita were two youths from Upatissa and Kolita, two villages near Rajagaha. While looking at a show they realized the insubstantiality of things and they decided to search for the way to liberation. First, they approached Sanjaya, the wandering ascetic at Rajagaha, but they were not satisfied with his teachings. So they went all over Jambudipa and came back to their native place, after searching for, but not finding the true dhamma. At this point they came to an understanding that one who found the true dhamma should inform the other.

One day, Upatissa came across Thera Assaji and learned from him the substance of the dhamma. The thera uttered the verse beginning with "Ye dhamma hetuppabhava", meaning, "those phenomena which proceed from a cause". Listening to the verse, Upatissa became established in the Sotapatti Magga and Phala. Then, as promised, he went to his friend Kolita, explained to him that he, Upatissa, had attained the state of Deathlessness and repeated the verse to his friend. Kolita also became established in Sotapatti Fruition at the end of the verse. They both remembered their former teacher and so went to Sanjaya and said to him, "We have found one who could point out the Path to Deathlessness; the Buddha has appeared in the world; the Dhamma has appeared; the Sangha has appeared... Come, let us go to the Teacher." They had hoped that their former teacher would go along with them to the Buddha and by listening to the discourses he, too, would come to realize Magga and Phala. But Sanjaya refused.

So Upatissa and Kolita, with two hundred and fifty followers, went to the Buddha, at Veluvana. There, they were initiated and admitted into the Order as bhikkhus. Upatissa as son of Rupasari became known as Thera Sariputta; Kolita as son of Moggali became known as Thera Maha Moggallana. On the seventh day after the initiation Maha Moggallana attained Arahathship. Thera Sariputta achieved the same a fortnight after initiation. On that day, the Buddha made them his two Chief Disciples (Agga-Savaka).

The two Chief Disciples then related to the Buddha how they went to the Giragga festival, the meeting with Thera Assaji and their attainment of Sotapatti Fruition. They also told the Buddha about their former teacher Sanjaya, who refused to accompany them. Sanjaya had said, "Having been a teacher to so many pupils, for me to become his pupil would be like a jar turning into a drinking cup. Besides, only few people are wise and the majority is foolish; let the wise go to the wise Gotama, the foolish would still come to me. Go your way, my pupils."

Thus, as the Buddha pointed out, Sanjaya's false pride was preventing him from seeing truth as truth; he was seeing untruth as truth and would never arrive at the real truth.

Then the Buddha spoke in verse as follows.

**Verse 11:** They take untruth for truth; they take truth for untruth; such persons can never arrive at the truth, for they hold wrong views.

**Verse 12:** They take truth for truth; they take untruth for untruth; such persons arrive at the truth, for they hold right views. At the end of the discourse, many people came to be established in Sotapatti Fruition.

**At the end of the discourse, many people came to be established in Sotapatti Fruition.**