



Midwest Vipassana Newsletter

Vipassana Meditation as taught by S.N. Goenka in the tradition of Sayagyi U Ba Khin

[Dhamma Pakāsa](#)

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Sensation, The Key to *Satipatthāna*

- by S. N. Goenka

Whatever truth is outside can be found within as well; whatever is within also exists outside. We may accept truth out of devotion or intellectual conviction, but in order to apprehend it directly we must explore within, to experience truth within ourselves. By thus coming face to face with truth, we can develop experiential wisdom that will make a real change in our lives.

The meditator starts investigation from a superficial level at which gross, solidified truths appear. But as one observes the apparent truth objectively, one starts penetrating from gross to subtler truths and finally witnesses ultimate truth. This ultimate truth can be experienced only by exploring reality within oneself.

The exploration of the truth within is Vipassana meditation. In the course of this exploration the meditator must investigate two fields, two aspects of reality: matter and mind. Investigation of the physical reality is called in Pāli *kāyānupassanā*. Investigation of the mental reality is called *cittānupassanā*. In fact, however, matter and mind cannot be experienced separately from each other because they are interdependent, interconnected.

Exploring one is bound to involve an exploration of the other. Neither can be fully understood without the other.

The field of matter: *kāyānupassanā* and *vedanānupassanā*

The physical reality of oneself must be investigated by direct experience; it will not help merely to imagine or speculate about it. How then to experience this truth, the reality of one's own body? If in the names of *kāyānupassanā* one sits with closed eyes and simply names or imagines the different parts of the body, such a person is far away from correct practice of *Vipassanā*, from the direct exploration of truth. We actually experience our bodies by feeling them - that is, by means of our bodily sensations. Therefore awareness of physical sensation is indispensable to the practice of *kāyānupassanā*. Sensations exist, of one type or another, at every part, every atom of the body.

Thus the investigation of the truth of body is bound to involve the exploration of bodily sensations - in Pāli, *vedanānupassanā*. Sensations can be experienced only within one's body, and the reality of body can be experienced only by means of sensations.

But though sensation is always based on the body, the truth of *vedanā* is not exclusively physical in nature; it is also one of the four mental aggregates. Sensation overlaps the two fields of mind and matter. For this reason observations of sensation, as we shall see, is a way to explore the mental-physical phenomenon in its entirety.

In the practice of *kāyānupassanā*, observation of sensations will enable the meditator to experience directly the changing nature of the physical structure. By examining every part of the body in turn,

one realizes that all sensations arise and pass away. As one repeats this practice, eventually a stage comes in which one experiences the instantaneous dissolution of every particle of the body. In this very subtle stage the meditator observes directly that the entire material structure is dissolving every moment; this experience is called in Pāli *bhaṅga-ñāṇa*, the realization of the truth of dissolution.

Through observing sensations as well, one can experience that the body is composed of four basic elements: earth, or solidity; water, or fluidity; air, or gaseousness; and fire, or temperature. Particles arise with the predominance of one or more elements, giving rise to the infinite variety of sensations. They arise to pass away. Ultimately the body is merely wavelets arising and passing away, constant dissolving. The apparently solid material structure is in reality nothing but ripples, vibrations, oscillations.

This truth of *anicca* can be realized directly only by the experience of bodily sensations. With this realization comes the understanding that one has no control over the changes constantly occurring in the body - *aniccā*. Therefore any attachment to what is changing beyond one's control is bound to bring nothing but suffering - *dukkha*. Knowing these facts now by personal experience, the meditator develops the wisdom of equanimity. By observing sensations he has reached the ultimate truth about body, and as a result his attachment to the body is shattered. He emerges from the folly of identifying with the body and develops real detachment, real enlightenment.

In the practice of *vedanānupassanā* as well, the meditator gives importance to observing all that happens within the body, all sensations. Whether they are pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral one learns to observe them objectively, and by doing so one breaks the old habit of wallowing in sensory experiences. By repeatedly observing the arising and passing away of sensations, the meditator learns not to be swayed by them, to keep an inner balance in the face of any experience whatsoever.

In this way the sensations that arise within the body are the base for the practice of both *kāyānupassanā* and *vedanānupassanā*. By investigating sensations the meditator explores to the depths the reality of the physical structure. The understanding arises, "Such is the body and such are bodily sensations, which create so many illusions

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and complications for us!" Previously one may have understood these phenomena intellectually, but now this understanding becomes the wisdom that develops from experience - the experience of bodily sensations.

The field of mind: *cittānupassanā* and *dhammānupassanā*
Another aspect of the practice of *Vipassanā* meditation is exploration of mental reality. As body cannot be experienced without the sensations that arise within it, similarly mind cannot be experienced apart from what its contents - in Pāli, Dhamma. Hence observation of mind (*cittānupassanā*) and observation of mental contents (*dhammānupassanā*) are inseparable. When the mind contains craving the meditator realizes this fact. When it is free from craving the meditator realizes this as well. Similarly he realizes when the mind contains aversion or ignorance, and when it is free from these defilements. He realizes when the mind is agitated and scattered, or tranquil and concentrated. This is how he practises *cittānupassanā*.

The meditator simply observes objectively whatever happens within the mind, whatever mental phenomenon, whatever Dhamma; this is the practice of *dhammānupassanā*. Without becoming upset, he accepts whatever the mind contains at this moment: craving or aversion, sloth and torpor or agitation, guiltiness or sceptical doubts. And the law of nature is such that by observing them objectively, one automatically eradicates these hindrances. The meditator also accepts when such *dhammas* arise as awareness, penetrative investigation, effort, joy, tranquility, concentration, and equanimity. And the law of nature is such that as one observes objectively, these wholesome mental qualities are multiplied.

Positive or negative, one simply accepts all mental phenomena. All *dhammas* arise within the *dhammas* that it contains. Hence *dhammānupassanā* and *cittānupassanā* are inseparable.

Further, the meditator realizes that the mind and mental contents are inextricably linked to the body. The mind is constantly in contact with the physical structure; whatever *dhammas* arise within it have the base not of mind alone but also of body. This physical aspect of mental events is easily apparent when strong emotions or agitation arise, but it exists as part of every mental phenomenon. Even the slightest passing of thought manifests not in the mind alone but in the combined field of mind and matter; that is, it is accompanied by a sensation within the body.

For this reason awareness of physical sensations is essential for the observation of mind and mental contents. Without this awareness, the exploration of mental reality will be incomplete and superficial.

All that happens within this mental and physical phenomenon manifests as bodily sensation. Every moment there is a contact of mind and matter at the subtlest level, and from this contact sensation arises. By means of sensation one can experience directly every aspect of the phenomenon of oneself. Therefore, not only *kāyānupassanā* and *vedanānupassanā* but also *cittānupassanā* and *dhammānupassanā* must be practised by observing bodily sensations.

And as the meditator does so he realizes, "Such is the mind, and such is all that it contains: impermanent, ephemeral, dissolving, changing every moment!" This is not a dogma that he accepts on faith alone, not merely the result of logical deduction, not an imagination or the fruit of contemplation. The meditator realizes the truth for himself directly by experiencing and observing bodily sensations.

Thus sensation becomes the base for the exploration of the entire world of mind and matter. Exploring in this way, the meditator comes to understand truth in all its aspects, the whole truth of oneself. This is *sampajañña*, the fullness of understanding; this is *satipaṭṭhāna*, the establishing of awareness. This is how to develop wisdom that will be unshakable, because it arises from a realization of the entire truth.

Observation of sensation leads the meditator to experience the ultimate truth of matter, mind, and mental contents: changing every moment. Then transcending the field of mind and matter, one comes to the ultimate truth which is beyond all sensory experience, beyond the phenomenal world. In this transcendent reality there is no more *anicca*: nothing arises, and therefore nothing passes away. It is a stage without birth or becoming: the deathless. While the meditator experiences this reality, the senses do not function and therefore sensations cease. This is the experience of *nirodha*, the cessation of sensations and of suffering.

In this way a Vipassana meditator practices all four *satipaṭṭhānas* by observing the sensations that arise within the body. He realizes directly the changing nature of body and mind, and as he continues the exploration within, at last he comes to the truth - first within the field of mind and matter, and then in the field beyond. This is how *dhammānupassanā* is practiced completely. This is how the four *satipaṭṭhānas* are properly practiced. This is how one's meditation, one's exploration of truth comes to fruition.

Come, oh meditators! With the help of bodily sensations let us explore the entire truth of ourselves, and by doing so let us achieve the final goal of real happiness, real peace.

IL Events

About a Vipassana Trust

"The trustees form the executive apparatus of a Vipassana organization. They fulfill the legal requirements of the state and work according to the guidelines set down from time to time by Principal Teacher, S.N. Goenka. The Trust is a way of involving, training and giving responsibility to more and more Dhamma workers in various activities of a center or area.

Serving on a trust and temporarily taking responsibility for some aspect of the operation of a particular Dhamma center or an area where courses are held, is one way students of Goenkaji can develop the quality of serving others.

Each trustee should understand that the whole purpose of their service is to progress on the path of Dhamma, to earn merits by selfless service."

"Committees: A trust will usually create a number of committees which can directly and more effectively oversee the various aspects of its operation. These committees are formed by the trust with the approval of the area teacher and are responsible to it, and members may include old students who are not trustees."

Dhamma Pakasa Committees and their current needs

Outreach Committee

The outreach committee at Dhamma Pakasa is in need of mem-

bers willing to help out in these areas: publicity, public talks, movie screenings, info packs, organizing and maintaining metta day library, organizing and facilitating yearly open house, help in creating monthly newsletters. This is a committee that is in much need of revival and is vital in spreading Dhamma to those in our community. There are things on and off site that can be done and time commitment may vary depending on task. If you are interested, please contact the committee at outreach-committee@pakasa.dhamma.org.

Household Committee

The household committee at Dhamma Pakasa is in need of members willing to help out in these areas: preparing and maintaining dorms and Dhamma hall, organizing and supervising after-course cleanup on day 11, checking and maintaining cleaning supplies. These tasks are best for those who are able to be at the center before and/or after courses when most maintenance is to be done. Great local server opportunity!!! If interested, please contact Jennie Williford at spiritofb@sbcglobal.net.

Dhamma Service Committee

The Dhamma Service Committee fulfills the very important task of assuring that there are enough volunteers to serve the meditation courses. When there is a shortage of servers for a particular course or for ongoing maintenance and workweeks, committee members outreach to old students who have previously indicated a willingness to help out at the Center. The committee coordinator arranges monthly phone meetings and reports to the Center Trust each month. Having enough volunteers is of vital importance and serving on this committee can be done by those who live a greater distance from the Center. Serving in this way can be very rewarding and of great help to the Center.

Technology Committee

The technology committee maintains the electronic equipment at the center. This includes the phone system, the computers and other electronic equipment. The technology committee also works very closely with the outreach committee to create and post periodic newsletter.

With over 20 people registering for each course, the center staff and registration committee are completely dependent on all of the equipment and systems working properly. There are also many other possibilities to use technology to improve work-flow at the center.

In order for this committee to serve students as it is meant to, volunteers are needed for:

- Maintain and update equipment
- Create and Post periodic newsletter
- Help maintain and add additional features to the Dhamma Pakasa website.

Anyone wanting to be added to the tech email list (Dhamma Pakāsa Tech Committee <Tech-Committee@pakasa.dhamma.org>) should post to Tech-Committee-subscribe@pakasa.dhamma.org requesting such.

Trust Meetings

Meetings are held monthly by the Illinois Vipassana Association Trust. As old students you are welcome to sit in on any trust meeting. If you are interested in the business and maintenance of the center, please come. There are many committees to get involved with and it is a great way to become more involved with your center and get to know other meditators in the area. Trust meeting days

also are an opportunity to sit and give dhamma service.

Upcoming Trust Meetings at Dhamma Pakasa

October 19 Trust Meeting
November 16 Trust Meeting
December 21 Trust Meeting

All old students are encouraged to come to all Trust meetings.

Friends Listserve

All Old Students who are interested in the business and maintenance of the center are welcome to join the IVA Trust/Friends listserve. You can do so by sending a blank email to friends-subscribe@pakasa.dhamma.org.

Ongoing Dhamma Service Opportunities at IVMC

There are always service opportunities at the center, and on top of full and part-time course service, we are in need of specific help on any Days 0, 1, 10, and 11. Below are task descriptions and contact numbers if you are interested.

Kitchen Support/Orientation: Day 0 and day 1 needs are prepping for the upcoming course and orienting new servers to the workings of the Center Kitchen. Day 11 is making sure there is a knowledgeable old student available to oversee cleaning. Contact: Aastha Jain At 847-348-0349.

Housekeeping: Day 0 is making sure that all the final touches are set up in the dorm (bathmats set out, blinds down, sheets on beds, laundry done). Day 11 is overseeing the Dorm checklist as the students are cleaning their rooms and helping out as needed. Contact: Jennie Williford 815-209-6676

Dhamma Server Table day 10: Sitting at the Dhamma service table and talking with students about service and its benefits and what tasks are available. Contact: the Service Committee at dhamma-service@pakasa.dhamma.org, or the center Manager at Manager@Pakasa.Dhamma.org.

Dana Table day 10 and 11: If you currently meet certain requirements, you may qualify to be trained in taking and recording Dana from students that have taken the course. We can put you in touch with someone who can talk with you in more detail about this job if you are interested to learn more about it. Contact: Dimitri Topitzes 414-372-5192

These tasks are great for local old-students who may not have time to take off for a full course but would like to help out the center through Dhamma Service. These specific tasks can be done in a day or weekend help. Day 0 and 1 are usually a Wednesday and a Thursday, and days 10 and 11 are usually a Saturday and a Sunday (see center schedule for specific dates). Please sign up through www.pakasa.dhamma.org if you are interested in any service opportunities.

Opportunities for Dana: The Illinois Vipassana Center is developing a wish list for items needed at Dhamma Pakasa. Old students are welcome to donate such items. To view the list of items, please go to <http://www.pakasa.dhamma.org/os/dana/contributions.shtml> (username: oldstudent, password: behappy). Please contact info@pakasa.dhamma.org to let us know what you would like to donate, and with any contact information.

Local Area Group Sitzings

Dekalb, IL : Flexible Time

Please contact to arrange for day and time for the sitting, directions or any other questions. Please include "Group Sit" in the subject line of your email. Tape will be played for the beginning chanting and metta in the end.

Contact [Upasana Taneja](mailto:uaneja7@yahoo.com) - Email : uaneja7@yahoo.com

Elgin, IL : Alternate Sunday 10:00 a.m.

Please contact [Vivek](mailto:vivek_j98@yahoo.com) and Aastha Jain for questions and directions. Sometimes the Sundays are switched so please call before coming.

Phone: (847)-348-0349 / Email: vivek_j98@yahoo.com

Address: 1188 Shawford Way Dr., Elgin, IL 60120

Naperville, IL : Every Sunday 6:00 a.m.

Please contact [Ajay Bawankule](mailto:ajay52@gmail.com) for questions and directions. Please call before coming.

Phone: (630)-961-2838 / Email: ajay52@gmail.com

Address: 1952 Nutmeg Lane, Naperville, IL 60565

Lincolnwood, IL : Every Sunday (sharp) 9:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.

Chicago-Area sitting, contact [Rajesh Chotalia](mailto:rkchotalia@hotmail.com) at -

Phone: (847)-676-3219 / Email: rkchotalia@hotmail.com

Address: 6615 N Lawndale Ave, Lincolnwood, Illinois - 60712

Rockford, IL : Every Sunday 4:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.

Please contact [Ginger Lightheart](mailto:vglightheart@sbcglobal.net) or [Jennie Williford](mailto:spiritofb@sbcglobal.net) if you plan to attend.

Ginger - Phone : 815-399-8441 / Email : vglightheart@sbcglobal.net

Jennie - Phone : 815-209-6676 / Email: spiritofb@sbcglobal.net

St Paul, MN : Every Sunday 7:00 - 8:00 p.m.

Please contact [Brad or Rosa](mailto:mnvipassana1@google.com) for directions or questions.

Phone: 612 362 9190 / Email: mnvipassana1@google.com

Colombus, OH : Every Wednesday 7:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

Please contact [Thomas & Heike Willburger](mailto:willburger@gmx.de) for directions :

Phone: (614)-986-7193 / Email: willburger@gmx.de

Milwaukee, WI : Every Sunday 7:00 p.m.

Please contact [Debbie Davis](mailto:davisdx@sbcglobal.net) for directions or questions.

Phone: (414)-372-5192 / Email: davisdx@sbcglobal.net

Address: 2520 N. Dousman Street, Milwaukee, WI 53222

Monthly One Day Courses in Chicago

One Day Vipassana Courses are now being held once a month in Downtown Chicago, at 141 W Jackson Blvd, the Chicago Board of Trade Building. All old students who have completed at least one ten-day course with S.N. Goenka or his assistant teachers are welcome to attend. One Day Courses will be conducted by an assistant teacher, who will be available for questions during noon interviews. Please visit the Old Student pages at the Dhamma Pakasa website (http://www.pakasa.dhamma.org/os_portal.htm) or email onedaysitschicago@gmail.com for dates and information. Announcements will also be sent by email in the coming weeks.

IVMC Course schedule

2008

Oct 8 - Oct 19	10-Day Course
Oct 22 - Nov 2	10-Day Course
Nov 5 - Nov 16	10-Day Course
Nov 19 - Nov 30	10-Day Course
Dec 3 - Dec 14	10-Day Course
Dec 17 - Dec 21	3-Day Old Student Course
Dec 27, 2008 - Jan 7, 2009	10-Day Course

2009

January 14 – 25	10-day course
January 26 – February 10	Work Period
February 11 – 22	10-day course
February 23 – March 10	Work Period
March 11 – 22	10-day Course
March 25 – April 5	10-day Course
April 8 – 12	3-day Old Student Course
April 13– 21	Work Period
April 22 – May 3	10-day Course
May 7 – 16	Satipaṭṭhāna
May 17	Open House
May 20 – 31	10-day Course
June 3 – 14	10-day Course
June 17 – 28	10-day Course

Use <http://www.dhamma.org/en/schedules/schpakasa.shtml> to register for courses

We hope this information is helpful to you.
With kind regards,

**Illinois Vipassana Meditation Center, Dhamma
Pakasa**

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