

Electronic Publishers Notice:

This work has been republished by Pariyatti as an electronic publication. Questions or comments regarding this electronic publication can be addressed to: Treasures@pariyatti.org

- Pariyatti is a nonprofit organization dedicated to enriching the world by
- disseminating the words of the Buddha,
 - providing sustenance for the seeker's journey, and
 - illuminating the meditator's path.



Pariyatti
867 Larmon Road
Onalaska, WA 98570 USA
360.978.4998
www.pariyatti.org

The Essence of Buddha Dhamma



Venerable Webū Sayādaw

PREFACE

In respect of *Patipatti Sāsanā* or the Practice of the Buddha's Teachings, with a view to the realization of the Truth, the Venerable Webū Sayādaw came to shine like a celestial luminary for his great efforts in ushering in a new era of revival of the Buddhist Vipassanā Meditation.

The Webū Sayādaw was born of U Lu Pe and Daw Kyin Nu, at Ingyinbin Village near Madaunghla Railway Station in Khin U Township, on Monday the 2nd

February, 1896 (the 6th day of the waxing moon in the month of Tabaung, 1257, Burmese Era).

After his ordination, he spent some time for higher studies of the Dhamma at the Masoyein monastery of Mandalay, where it was noticed that he was more bent on the practical aspect of the Buddha's Teachings. Accordingly, he left for the valley of Webūla and Webāra Hills near Kyaukse, where he sojourned for several years, striving most earnestly for the realization of the goal in view. Although he was leading a quiet life, his good reputation spread and he came to be known as the Webū Sayādaw. His real name was Bhadanta Kumāra or U Kumāra. His retreat also came to be known as Webū-chaung. As a rule, the Webū Sayādaw stayed there for about six months, July to December, three months at Aungmye Yeikthā, Shwebo, January to March, and three months at Ingyinbin Village, April to June. It was at his birthplace that the Webū Sayādaw passed away on Sunday, the 26th June, 1977 (the 11th waning day of Waso, 1339 B.E.) at 7:30 P.M. It may be recalled that the Venerable Sāriputta, the chief disciple of the Buddha, passed away into *Parinibbāna* at his birthplace.

The Webū Sayādaw taught the practice of Vipassanā Meditation to about 500 yogis daily for fifty years, from 1927 to 1977 (1289 to 1339 B.E.). From time to time, he came down from his Upper Myanmar Centre to the deltaic towns such as Pathein and Myaungmya, to the coastal towns such as Ye, Tavoy, and Mrigui, and to

Yangon and the towns between Yangon and Mandalay on the railway line. He also travelled to Ceylon (Sri Lanka) and India for pilgrimage and dissemination of the Buddha-Dhamma.

The most remarkable thing about the Webū Sayādaw's sermons was the repetition of the same sequence. He would begin by giving *sīla* to the yogis or the audience and then continue with an introductory speech, which might vary in length, but when it came to the objective of the sermon, he would hold on to it in the same manner, hardly altering the phraseology of expression in words. This booklet contains the usual exhortation of the Webū Sayādaw. If he gave five sermons a day, he would repeat invariably the usual exhortation. It may be likened to the Buddha's exhortation about five *dullabhas*.

On the assumption that the Webū Sayādaw gave sermons for ten thousand times in the long period of fifty years, the words contained in this booklet must have been repeated more or less ten thousand times. The significance of the Webū Sayādaw's words is best understood when it is looked upon as a simple message expressed in a down-to-earth manner for the realization of the supreme goal of *magga ñāna*, *phala ñāna*, and *Nibbāna*.

For this very reason, the Webū Sayādaw's simple and yet most significant message was printed time and again, and tens of thousands of the leaflets had been

circulated by donors at every place where the Sayādaw delivered his sermons.

In the year 1927 (1289 B.E.), he ventured to address these words to the teacher of his youthful days, with the intention of repaying the debt of gratitude he owed to him. In conclusion, he declared boldly to his mentor the Venerable Bhadanta Sumana thus:

"Bhante, this is the shortest way to *Nibbāna*. It can stand the test of anyone from the scriptural and practical standpoints."

The Venerable Bhadanta Sumana put into practice this method explained by the Webū Sayādaw and also exhorted the monks and lay persons alike to follow his example. Soon the followers of the Webū Sayādaw increased to about 500 in number.

Buddha's teaching are for everybody. They are practicable and can be practiced by everyone, irrespective of age, race, or religion. Anyone in search of happiness and truth should follow the Buddha's way of life. In fact, the Buddha's way of life is very much sought after and followed everywhere nowadays. The shortest way to *Nibbāna* as explained by the Webū Sayādaw is, indeed, simple, clear, understandable, and can be put into practice with no difficulty.

As an example, it may be mentioned that Dr. Hislop, an American lady, who became a Buddhist nun (Medāvi by name) has been propagating the Webū Sayādaw's method in the west, where science prevails, and she is making a reasonable success.

Wherever the Webū Sayādaw went, he boldly asserted that anyone who practices his method with faith and energy can attain, as in the lifetime of the Buddha, the *jhānas*, *abhiññās*, *samāpatti*, four *magga-phalas*, *paṭisambhidā*, right up to *Arahatta magga-phala*. This method embodies the teachings contained in the Tipiṭaka, and can also bring forth worldly blessings such as health, long life, prosperity, and happiness.

Concise as it is, this booklet explains a method for all-round development or, in other words, for the mundane and ultra-mundane progressive realizations.

Truth and Righteousness shall prevail in this world.

The Words of Wisdom

**enunciated by
the Venerable Webū Sayādaw**

After you have taken the vow of *sīla*, fulfil it. Once you have fulfilled it all your wishes will be fulfilled. It will bring happiness to you now and also in the future.

There is nothing besides the words of the Buddha which will bring peace and happiness to one in the present

existence as well as in future lives in *saṃsāra*. The words of the Buddha are embodied in the *Tipiṭaka*, the three baskets of knowledge. The *Tipiṭaka* is voluminous, so we must take the essence of it.

The essence of the *Tipiṭaka* is the 37 factors of *bodhipakkhiya dhammā* (the requisites of Enlightenment). The essence of *bodhipakkhiya dhammā* is the Noble Eightfold Path. The essence of the Noble Eightfold Path is the three *sikkhās* and the essence of the three *sikkhās* is *eko dhammo* or the one and only Dhamma.

The three *sikkhās* are *adhi sīla* (Higher Morality), *adhi citta* (Higher Mentality), and *adhi paññā* (Higher Wisdom).

When one is mindful of *rūpa* and *nāma*, there shall be no physical and verbal violence. This is called *adhi sīla*.

When *adhi sīla* develops, the mind becomes concentrated and tranquil. This is called *adhi citta*.

When *adhi citta* (Samādhi Concentration) develops, one gains insight into the real nature of *rūpa* and *nāma*. In a flash of lightning *nāmarūpa* undergoes an incessant change to the extent of billions of times. This ever-changing process is beyond the control of any *Deva* or *Brahmā*. One who knows by insight the process of becoming and cessation achieves *adhi paññā*.

The most obvious thing to one and all is the breathing process. The nose is a prominent part of the body — the out-breath and the in-breath are ever touching the nostrils. The nostrils are the sensitive part of the nose, which the out-breaths and in-breaths touch as they go out or come in. In other words, the wind-element or element of motion comes into contact with the nostril, producing a sensation.

Both the wind-element and the nostrils are *rūpa* and it is the *nāma* that knows the contact or sensation. Ask no one what *rūpa* and *nāma* are. Be mindful of the nostrils. One knows the sensation of in-breathing. One knows the sensation of out-breathing. Keep on knowing the in-breathing and out-breathing and there will be no chance for *lobha*, *dosa* and *moha* to arise. Fires of *lobha*, *dosa* and *moha* remain extinguished by themselves with the resultant calm, and peace of mind.

One cannot know the sensation before the contact. One can no longer know the sensation when the contact has disappeared. One must take notice of the actual contact. This is called the 'immediate present' or 'right on the present'.

Be mindful of the present continuously. If one can keep on knowing the present for 24 hours at a stretch the results are evident. If one cannot be mindful of what is taking place at every moment continuously, one will fail to notice what happens in a flash of lightning and find oneself on the debit side.

If one is mindful of the contact of breathing and nostrils, one will realize that there is nothing but *rūpa* and *nāma*. Besides *rūpa* and *nāma*, there is no such thing as "I", "he" or "you", no self, no man, no woman. One would know for himself that the Buddha's teaching is truth, only the truth, and nothing but the truth. He need not ask anybody about it. Awareness of the contact between the wind-element and the tip of the nose organ produces there and then the knowledge that there is no such thing as *atta*, ego, or soul.

At these moments of awareness one's *ñāna*, comprehension or insight, is clear. That is called *sammā-dit̥ṭhi*, Right Understanding or Right View. There is nothing else besides *nāma* and *rūpa*. This is called *nāma-rūpa-pariccheda-ñāna*, Analytical Knowledge of Mind and Body.

The continuous practice of this contemplation eliminates the notion of *atta* or self, and produces a clear vision or knowledge. This benefit is the result of momentary contemplation. Do not think it is not much. Do not think that nothing is known, no benefit accrues during meditation. Such benefits can be gained only during the *Buddha-Sāsanā*. While meditating, forget about food and other necessities, and strive with diligence for the progress of insight that would end up with the realization of *magga ñāna*, *phala ñāna*, and *Nibbāna*.

Sanditṭhika Dhamma Way

as taught by
the Venerable Webū Sayādaw

1. The teachings of the Buddha contained in the *Tipiṭaka* have but one object: liberation from suffering. Methods vary but the object is the same. It is not necessary to follow all the methods. Choose one of them, and what is required is to put it into practice with adequate energy and in a steadfast manner.

2. *Vijjā* (knowledge) and *carana* (conduct) must be developed simultaneously. Two things can be done at the same time.

3. Follow the teaching of the Buddha as well as that of the teacher. Be respectful. Be humble. *Khanti* (patience) and *mettā* (loving kindness) must be practiced assiduously.

4. *Vipassanā* means to see what really is. The yogis must see things as they really are, otherwise it is not *Vipassanā*.

5. "What really is" is not to be sought elsewhere; it is in one's own body. It is ever present there. It is unavoidable. It is *nāma-rūpa* (mind-matter).

6. Of all the *nāma* and *rūpa* manifestations in the body, what is not easily recognizable but is easy to contemplate upon is the out-breathing and in-breathing.

7. The out-breathing and in-breathing process begins with birth and ends only at death. It is ever there whether one is working, talking, studying, or sleeping.

8. Although the out-breathing and in-breathing process is ever continuous, it is hardly noticed by unmindful persons. a Burmese saying goes:

**"Those who are unmindful would
not notice a cave;
those who are mindful would notice
even the mist."**

Only those who are mindful would be aware of the breathing process.

9. Here, awareness means that the yogi takes notice of the in-breath as it touches the nostrils and the out-breath as it touches the nostrils. As the breathing is continuous, so must the awareness be continuous. Only then can the awareness be properly termed *Vipassanā* meditation.

10. There are 24 hours in a day. If the awareness could be continuous for 24 hours the beneficial results would be very clear. If possible, *nesajjika dhutanga* (sitting ascetical exercise) should be performed. What the Buddha teaches is not for suffering but for the cessation of suffering. In the lifetime of the Buddha, those who performed this sitting ascetical exercise were healthier

and lived longer. If one yields to sleepiness and sleeps, he is likely to sleep forever in the *saṃsāra* (round of rebirth). If one wishes to sleep, go to that place where no sleep is necessary.

11. Being mindful of what really is, or seeing things as they really are, is the main purpose of the three *sikkhās*, the Noble Eightfold Path, the thirty-seven *bodhipakkhiya*, in short, the entire *Tipiṭaka*. They are all covered, as it were, by a stroke.

12. Touch or contact is *rūpa*. Knowing or awareness is *nāma*.

13. Appearance and disappearance of vibrating manifestations are the becoming and cessation of *rūpa* and *nāma*.

14. As the yogi notices the swiftly changing process of the appearance and disappearance of contacts at the nostrils, *vipassanā samādhi* develops in due course, that is, after a considerable time. The concentration so developed becomes more and more intense and the yogi becomes aware of swiftly sweeping changes all over the body.

15. When these swiftly sweeping changes are seen with insight, the characteristic of *anicca* becomes most obvious and, accordingly, the characteristics of *dukkha* and *anatta* are also seen. It is not necessary to utter them by word of mouth. *Vipassanā* meditation means

being mindful of what actually happens. Mindfulness develops day by day and consequently the yogi shall gain penetrating insight.

16. As the yogi develops concentration, so does insight develop, culminating in the realization of *magga ñāna* and *phala ñāna*. For the yogi, this realization is as evident and satisfying as a deep thirst that is quenched after drinking water. The yogi who has realized *magga-phala* has realized it by himself and that too in this present lifetime, not hereafter. Hence the result of the practice is *sanditṭhiko*, seen by oneself and in oneself.

17. After this attainment of *magga ñāna* and *phala ñāna*, if one desires to regain *phala-samāpatti* (attainment of fruition), one must turn back to *Vipassanā* practice to progressive realization. *Phala-samāpatti* may be likened to one's own dwelling.

18. With firm faith and unflagging energy, be mindful of the contact of the breathing with the nostrils without any let-up or break. Do not waver. Do not procrastinate. Do it now, and the sustained practice will yield the result forthwith. The result is the end of the torment of passions and indescribable bliss. Hence the result of the practice is *akāliko*, immediately effective.

How to Fulfil Sīla

Doing meritorious deeds such as cleaning a pagoda or watering the holy Bo-tree, or serving one's teacher or

parents, or even attending to the needs of one's family — all these will go into the credit side of one's fulfillment of *sīla*. While doing these things, one can still meditate. If you neglect any of these duties, can you say for certain that you have fulfilled *sīla*? If *sīla* is unfulfilled, can you acquire the happiness you look for? If there is no happiness, no peace, you cannot get *samādhi*. Without *samādhi*, you cannot acquire *paññā*.

Acknowledgement

This electronic rendering of the teaching of Venerable Webū Sayādaw was adapted from a booklet received from the Webū monastery in the Webūla and Webāra Hills near Kyaukse. The original booklet had been donated by:

U Myo Khin & Daw Khin Win Tint
Yi Yi Photo Studio
Mandalay, Myanmar