

Buddhist Meditation and Human Development: A Personal Encounter

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Dear Dhamma friends,

I am just a humble admirer of the Buddhadhamma - just trying to apply Vipassana meditation in my daily life. As a human being, an M.D., and educator - I am just trying to see if there REALLY is a way out of needless suffering during our short stay on this beautiful planet. Humans suffer tremendously, regardless of their life circumstances, as well as other sentient beings. There is an 'ocean' of suffering. One needs lots of hard work and great courage just to keep going, to preserve basic dignity of life and death, to survive all struggles and negativities, to raise above common-stupidity of endless judgments, presumptions, cravings and hatreds.

The turning point is, when you start practicing Buddhadhamma and embark on a great personal discovery to understand that all suffering comes from your own mind - it seems so simple. The Great Teacher, Buddha, clearly pointed out the way to realize the Four Noble Truths, that is, through the Eightfold Noble Path. SILA-SAMADHI-PANNA, sila-samadhi-panna, sila-samadhi-panna.... Nothing else. And yet, practicing can be so painful, dreadful, terrifying... So, once I asked one of the Goenkaji's senior assistant teachers: "How could I ever recommend Vipassana to anyone when it can be so dreadful from time to time?" His answer was: "Yes, yes, sitting two hours a day to practice Vipassana is the second most difficult thing in life!" "And then what is the first?" asked I. "Not to practice Vipassana!" said he. So, "Just keep going, keep practicing" I have to remind myself often.

Falling down and raising up is normal, being worried and terrified is normal as well as being happy, equally normal. All is subject to change, like it or not. THE TRUTH! Yes, I am willing to work for truth, compassion, and love... to investigate, apply and respect as much as I can. I can see no other way to develop further as a human being, to help myself and people around me, if possible. When I feel my practice is not

really good, when doubts come, negativities trying to overrule... I hear some of my teacher's instructions:

“Stay aware and with equanimity. Accept with a calm and quiet mind. Do nothing. JUST OBSERVE. See what's going on inside your body. Observe your natural bodily sensations without any reaction...or go to Ana-pana for a few minutes. Just remain aware with equanimity. Do nothing and see what happens.... What happens inside your own system? Your own body-mind system. See the things as they really are, get out of needless suffering.... Be selfish: purify your own mind. Pure mind is a happy mind, full of love and compassion. Keep on purifying your mind. Practice and help others!”

I am grateful for all these inspiring instructions and my single duty is to follow...., to practice, the best I can. JUST PRACTICE!!!

As a scientist I often think: “If Buddha was living now, he would get the Nobel Prize for the discovery of neuro-biological laws of mind-function” and since human community respects such things (as the Nobel Prize)... Buddhadhamma might be included in all levels of education. That would be great! It would start changing the world, for better and better. Sounds like a childish joke, but I do believe that would push human development in a right beneficial way.

As a challenge to hopelessness:

At least I am helping myself to become aware that my main duty is to purify and train my own mind first. One can easily forgive other people's negativities and wrongdoings knowing they are all the results of his or her own mind, too. That is a great benefit from practicing Dhamma. Natural, automatic, compassion is a doctor for all illnesses. I only wish I could be such a doctor, forever compassionate. To know that everybody suffers is a great discovery, leading again to compassion. To know that no-one else is responsible for my own suffering, but myself, is a great discovery, leading again to compassion for people around me. So I see that as the goal in my present life. DEVELOP COMPASSION. (Compassion for yourself also: to free yourself from needless worries and fears!)

I do not know what kind of mind *the enlightenment* could be and I cannot crave for that. I know what miracles, compassion, and *metta* could achieve and do not crave for that either since craving is useless anyway. You have that or not - in any single moment. Your heart is open or not. Practicing Vipassana surely helps at least to encounter such positive states of mind (heart), from time to time.

Once when I was crying (during one retreat) and asking the teacher what can I do when I am far away from any teacher, when I have no-one to help me with my troubles... he told me boldly: “Dhamma will help you, Dhamma will teach you.”

“Hmmm”.

Now we have written words, sweet words of saintly people. Here, my great pleasure is to mention (beside my own teacher, Goenkaji) - the late Venerable Ajahn Chah, the great Thai teacher whose words always arouse my spirit: “Everything is teaching us.” Really, if we are aware.... everything could teach us and help us. The doctor inside me often thinks: First make a diagnosis and then apply the medicine at hand: The Middle Way.

BE AWARE, DO NOTHING.

Atapi sampajanno satima.

MAY ALL BEINGS BE HAPPY!

Thank you.