

# Vipassana Newsletter

In the tradition of Sayagyi U Ba Khin,

as taught by S. N. Goenka

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## WORDS OF DHAMMA

*Yath± bubbulaka½ passe,  
yath± passe mar<sup>2</sup>cika½,  
eva½ loka½ avekkhanta½,  
maccur±j± na passati.*

—Dhammapada 170

Just as one would look upon a bubble,  
just as one would look upon a mirage,  
if one thus looks upon the world,  
the King of Death finds one not.

## THE TEN SOLDIERS OF MĀRA

by Thray Sithu Sayagyi U Ba Khin

*The following is condensed from a translation of a discourse by Sayagyi U Ba Khin to Vipassana students during a course. It was first published in the Sayagyi U Ba Khin Journal and has been adapted for the Newsletter.*

You have to be very careful. You have to stand firm and face many difficulties, so that you can know true *anicca* (impermanence) with your own experience. You must work very hard—that is why we repeatedly remind you. Difficulties come at this stage of the course. During the time of our great benefactor, Saya Thetgyi, students would experience various difficulties in meditation, such as not being able to feel the object of meditation at all. When asked to focus their attention on the top of their heads, they couldn't feel anything. During Anapana they couldn't feel the area around the nostrils. Some could not feel their breath while they were breathing. Some said that they could not feel their bodies. While you are here, you too will find these things happening. Sometimes you will not be able to feel sensations and you won't be able to maintain your attention.

Some think that they have attained *nibb±na* (the ultimate reality) when they cannot feel their bodies. If you cannot feel the presence of your body, just hit it with your hand, or punch yourself and see. There is no need to ask the Teacher. You will know if your body is there or not. These uncertainties are rather disconcerting, aren't they?

The nature of *vipall±sa* (mental distortion, corruption) makes fools of you. These are undesirable defilements hidden inside people. They are present in every one of us. When there is understanding of *anicca* the defilements have to leave; but they don't want to—they want this understanding to leave instead. The *nibb±na* nature of *anicca* is very potent, so M±ra (personification of negative forces) fights against it. The *Padh±na Sutta* describes the ten soldiers of M±ra. We have to be careful of these ten soldiers, as they are the destroyers of meditation.

The first soldier of Māra is the desire to enjoy sense pleasures. Some people have come to meditate but not to attain *nibb±na* at all. They come with ulterior motives such

as, "If I become close to Sayagyi, who knows so many people in high positions, I may get a promotion in my job." There are some persons like that. They come with greed in their hearts. They cannot be successful in their meditation. There must be no greed. When you asked for the technique of Vipassana you said, "*Nibb±nassa sacchikara°atth±ya me bhante*"—in order to realize *nibb±na*... I will teach you to understand the Four Noble Truths, but if you are not interested, and intend to take your time about it, what can I do?

The second soldier of Māra is unwillingness to reside or be happy in a quiet place such as a forest dwelling.

Yesterday somebody planned to run away. He got up early and packed his belongings. He planned to sit at half past seven with you all, and then leave while I was checking the students at eight. He was planning to run like mad, catch a bus, and get home. He thought he would collect his bags at some later date. Luckily, I don't know why, I gave the one hour *adhijjh±na* (strong determination) sitting earlier, and he had to sit that one hour. There he was—trapped! After the *adhijjh±na* sitting, M±ra left him, and he didn't want to leave anymore.

When unwillingness to reside in a quiet place arises, the person wants to leave and run away. He may inform us that he wishes to leave or he may just quietly leave. The second soldier does not want to stay in a quiet secluded place because of the turmoil inside.

The third soldier of Māra is hunger—not being satisfied with food. One student came with boxes full of food and said that he could not stay without eating, so I said, "In that case you may eat, but try one, two or three days and see for yourself." However, he was not hungry at all during the ten days.

Another student said that after about three days of eating only twice a day, he would become shaky, and that in all his life, he had never done that for more than three days at a time. He asked for permission to eat and I said, "Of course, if needed." When he got here, he meditated the first day, the second day, and so on, and was not hungry at

all. One does not feel hungry if the meditation is progressing, but only when the meditation is not going well. Something inside is making one hungry. One cannot control the hunger then. Once the meditator is established in meditation, he does not feel hunger anymore.

**The fourth soldier of Māra** is the craving for various tastes and foods. We provide the best food we can so that everyone will eat well and enjoy it.

What happens when very tasty, delicious food is eaten? Doesn't this stimulate more craving for food? Is it possible to eat without any appreciation of the taste of the food? Only the *arahant* (fully liberated person) can do this. Wasn't the purpose of your coming here for this course to get rid of the *kilesa* (mental impurities), to get rid of the *ta<sup>o</sup>h<sup>±</sup>* (craving)? If you keep your eyes closed nothing can be seen, so you will not be craving and clinging for visual objects. The same goes for hearing. There is no one here with a tape recorder or radio playing songs. You don't have to listen to them. It is the same with smell. Nobody here goes around wearing perfume, so there need not be any craving and clinging for any sense of smell. There is nothing here for you to feel that will give you pleasant bodily sensations. But the tongue—can it avoid taste? Only if you don't eat, and in that case a doctor would have to give you glucose injections for sustenance. Taste will occur when food comes in contact with the tongue. If you eat less tasty food, then craving and clinging for taste will be reduced.

Since you have come here to get rid of your defilements of craving, we should help you by providing the best environment so that they don't increase, shouldn't we? You are trying to annihilate them. We don't want to eradicate craving on the one hand, and increase it by food on the other. We do not provide an evening meal. By not providing it we have so much less to do. It is better for us and better for you too, because you are sure to become drowsy if you eat an evening meal. So you can do without it. If you eat well in the morning and at lunchtime the two meals will provide enough for your body's requirements.

**The fifth soldier of Māra** is drowsiness, sloth and torpor. You can understand this. Even Mah<sup>±</sup> Moggall<sup>±</sup>na (one of Buddha's chief disciples) suffered from it. Some of you can fall asleep while sitting. When I used to go for my meditation retreats, there was an old man who accompanied me. We sat in Saya Thetgyi's meditation centre in the meditation room and he sat behind me wearing a big yogi shawl. A little while later, he started snoring aloud. Normally there are not many people who can sit and snore, but there are many meditators who can do this—sit and snore, then wake up! This is called *th<sup>2</sup>na-middha* (sloth and torpor). *Th<sup>2</sup>na-middha* cannot be avoided. When insight and wisdom become sharpened, the peaceful nature of *nibb<sup>±</sup>na* is felt; and when the wholesome and unwholesome natures clash, a reaction occurs and produces heat. Then the person becomes drowsy and sleepy.

If you feel drowsy at times, just breathe a bit harder; you've lost your *sam<sup>±</sup>dhi* (concentration). This is a kick from within. Your *sam<sup>±</sup>dhi* has gone. If you lose your *sam<sup>±</sup>dhi*, focus your attention on the nostrils again, breathe harder and try to calm down. Sometimes when the *aniccavijj<sup>±</sup>* (the wisdom of impermanence) becomes stronger, you experience the meeting of physical and mental experience in your body and your insight-intuition

becomes very sharp and very strong. Then there's a very strong kick from within and you lose your understanding of *anicca* and become disoriented. You can't understand what happened and you ask the Teacher.

If such a thing happens suddenly, there are two ways to cope with it. One method is to try and work to get re-established in *sam<sup>±</sup>dhi*, as I have told you. Or, you can go outside and wake yourself up and the reaction will pass away. Do not go and sleep when this reaction happens. I am giving you methods to cope. They are important from the practical aspect. Drowsiness always occurs when *sa<sup>a</sup>kh<sup>±</sup>ras* (impurities) come up. Then we have to apply *anicca* firmly. It should not be just paying lip service to *anicca*, not just from the mouth. It should be the actual knowledge of the changing nature of the body with the awareness of sensations. If you practise in this way, you will overcome and win.

**The sixth soldier of Māra** is not wishing to be alone and being afraid of solitude. Some cannot sit in one room but keep changing rooms, looking for company and feel frightened when alone. One female student was afraid of solitude. Her house is very big but she did not dare to stay by herself in any room; she needed a companion at all times. She came here to meditate and brought a maid with her. She asked my permission to keep the lights on when she meditated in her room, so I allowed her to do so. Not only that, but somebody had to sit quite close to her when she meditated. She did not dare to stay alone. When she was by herself she felt flushes all over her body. After staying for a course, she got a little better. After the next course she was in the little cell by herself in the dark. She came regularly for ten days every month and benefited quite well from it. She was first class in being afraid but her fear is gone now.

**The seventh soldier of Māra** is doubt about whether one can be successful in meditation. I suppose this is true of everybody—wondering if his or her meditation will be successful or not. (That girl is laughing.) You *can* succeed. The important thing is to wash away the *akusala* (unwholesome conditioning), and *kilesa* (mental defilements) embedded in us. That is important.

**The eighth soldier of Māra** is becoming proud and arrogant when the meditation is successful. When the meditation improves, one can feel it inside. The defilements become lighter and one tends to get conceited and arrogant, and think, "That fellow does not seem to be doing too well. I'd better help him." I am saying this from my personal experience.

A long time ago when this meditation centre was started, there was no Dhamma hall. There was a ten-foot square hut that was here when we bought the land. One day one student came out after the morning sitting and said, "Look." He hitched up his *longyi* and there were little lumps all over his thighs and legs just like the skin of a plucked duck. The kick from within was so strong that all those lumps appeared. He hitched his *longyi* up and showed us saying, "Please look. See how strong the kick from within was. You too, please try hard, please try hard." The next day he could not meditate. He could not feel any sensations and had to approach Sayagyi for guidance. When he preached, there was ego in it, the "I" was in it, "I am doing well. These people don't seem to be getting anywhere." He played very good soccer, was very short-tempered, ready to hit, strike and punch. When a very bad-

tempered person with a lot of heat has a kick from inside, it shows up on the body surface.

This is why I am telling you all not to preach. If there is anything that you want to ask, ask me. If there is anything that you want to say, tell me. If you progress in your practice, just stay quiet and proceed with your own meditation.

**The ninth soldier of Māra** refers to the Teacher and concerns becoming well known, receiving many offerings, gaining much respect and homage. I receive a lot of homage and offerings. I have to control myself to not get conceited. Look here, isn't it likely to cause conceit? I have to guard myself. We started this work here for the people of the Accountant General's office so they could meditate in their free time, but there are so few of them here now. We started this not on the basis of money, but on the basis of Dhamma. Any office worker who meditates for ten days becomes a member. The admission fee is ten days of meditation. Isn't it good? No need to pay a cent of subscription. Just meditate steadily, guard your practice, do not lose it. We started from that and have come to this. Money can't do it. It was Dhamma that did it. We believe in this, and we do not have any money either.

This centre does not belong to me. U Ba Khin should not get conceited, saying this is U Ba Khin's centre. I do not own it. It belongs to the Vipassana Association of the Accountant General's Office. I will have to leave if they drive me out. See, how nice! I do not own it. I have to be re-elected each year. Only if they re-elect me will I be here. If they say that they have found someone better than me, and elect that person, it's over for me. Or some members from the committee may not like me, they may say I talk too much and elect someone else. Then I would have to leave. I do not own the place.

**The tenth soldier of Māra** is following a false Dhamma, creating a new and special Dhamma, in order to acquire abundant offerings, praising oneself and looking down on others. This is why I do not want to say too much about others. Let others speak as they like about us, isn't that right? Some teachers get attached to receiving offerings, so as to get more students. They teach what the students would like—false teachings, teachings that are not Buddha's teachings—simply because they want the homage and offerings. They stop working with true Dhamma. That is the tenth soldier of Māra.

Dhamma dissolves sorrows and miseries and gives happiness. Who gives this happiness? The Buddha does not give it, it is the *aniccavijjā* (wisdom of impermanence) inside you that gives it. We should practise Vipassana so that the *aniccavijjā* will neither stop nor disappear. How do we practise? Focus your attention on the four elements, be calm, cultivate *samādhi* and do not let *sīla* (moral precepts) be broken.

Telling lies is the one that I am afraid of among the precepts. I am not afraid of the others, because, by lying the basis of *sīla* is weakened. When *sīla* is weakened, *samādhi* will get weakened and *paññā* (wisdom) will also get weakened. Speak truthfully, work regularly, build up *samādhi* and pay attention to what is happening in your body; then the nature of *anicca* will come up naturally.

Our benefactor Saya Thetgyi said, "Very fast, vibrating incessantly, helter-skelter, broken up, burnt down, the destruction of the body—these are the signs of impermanence." It is the body that is changing. The

thought that knows that the *rūpa* (matter) is changing is the *nāma* (mind). When the *rūpa* changes and has gone, the *nāma* which knew about the changed-and-gone *rūpa*, also is changed and goes. Both *rūpa* and *nāma* are *anicca*. Keep this in your mind, be aware of it.

Focus your attention on the top of your head, and move down through the whole body, from the top of the head to the forehead and then the face, from the face to the neck, the neck to the shoulders, from the shoulders along to the hands. Wherever the mind goes it may be like touching with a small torch and feeling the heat wherever the torch touches, wherever the mind goes. Why? Because there is burning and annihilation taking place inside; it is the innate nature of combustion of atomic units within. This is certainly present. Learn to be sensitive to it so that you can feel it. Try it with an attentive mind and you will know.

Once the meditation is practised and once one becomes aware and observes with Vipassana knowledge, the defilements, the *samudaya akusala* (arisen unwholesomeness) cannot remain much longer. They have to leave gradually and when they are all gone, the person becomes controlled and stable, and able to live well.

How long will one have to work? Until all the immeasurable, uncountable old *akusala kamma* (unwholesome actions) accumulated along one's journey through the *saṁsāra* (cycle of rebirth) are eradicated by observing the nature of *anicca*. Then one becomes *sotāpanna* (one who has reached the first stage of saintliness, has experienced *nibbāna*), and *ariyapuggala* (noble person). This cannot be achieved easily.

To reach the final *nibbāna* where all the *saṅkhāras* are abolished is very far off, but wouldn't you like to try and see for yourself the minor *nibbāna*? If it could be tasted only after death, these foreigners would never practise this meditation. They have tasted a bit, liked it and have kept coming back from near and far. They send their friends and acquaintances who also come from afar. Why is this? Because they have experienced the taste of Dhamma.

It is important that there is a Teacher to help students to have a taste of Dhamma. But students have to work to experience the taste. What is this taste called? It is called the *Dhamma rasa*.

"*Sabba rasa ½ dhamma rasa ½ jināti.*"

Of all the tastes, the taste of Dhamma is the most noble, the best.

You have to try to work hard to get that taste. Just as the human monarch enjoys human pleasures, the *devas* (celestial beings) enjoy the *deva* pleasures and *brahmās* (higher celestial beings) enjoy *brahmā* pleasures; the noble *ariyas* (saintly persons) such as the Buddha and *arahants* can also enjoy the taste of the Dhamma that they have obtained. You must try hard until you too can enjoy this taste, but please do not work to the extreme, without moderation. Try to work according to the schedule we have given, work at the right time, to the fullest, with great care and effort. 🙏

#### GOENKAJI'S DISCOURSES ON TELEVISION

Goenkaji's discourses in Hindi are being broadcast on Aastha TV channel daily at 5:00 p.m.

## MEGA COURSE AT POLICE TRAINING SCHOOL

A special course for 1177 young recruits of Delhi Police was held at the Police Training School, *Jharoda Kalan*, New Delhi, from 19<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> November 2001. The course was conducted by 16 assistant teachers (including one female AT). Forty-four Dhamma workers served the course, 17 from Delhi police. Many staff members from the Police Training College and School also helped in the arrangements for the mess, cleaning, security, etc.

The course for the 56 female recruits was conducted at *Dhamma Rakkhaka*, the regular Vipassana Centre in the Kautilya Niwas building of the Police Training College. Most of the students meditated earnestly and were very satisfied with their experiences. They also maintained good discipline during the course.

The course for the 1121 male recruits was conducted in the Police Training School in a specially erected *shamiyana* covering an area of about 50 feet by 500 feet, which served as the main Dhamma Hall. This *shamiyana* was partitioned into fifteen smaller halls. About 75 students sat in each of these mini Dhamma halls and meditated under the guidance of an assistant teacher. All the instructions were centrally relayed from mini-hall No. 8 by the main conducting Teacher. The evening discourse was shown on five giant screens (each about 5 feet by 5 feet) with the help of centrally synchronized powerful multimedia projectors. During the discourse, some of the partitions were removed so as to club three adjacent mini Dhamma halls into one unit with the giant screen positioned in the middle mini-hall.

All the students tried their best to understand the meditation technique and most of them practised earnestly. The course was marked by very good discipline in the Dhamma hall and the dining area. However, in the residential zone spread over a very large area (the students were residing in 64 tents) 'noble silence' could not be maintained scrupulously.

Nevertheless, the assistant teachers felt that most of the students were able to appreciate and experience for themselves the benefits of practising pure Dhamma. This was confirmed by the feedback given by the students after the *metta* session on the tenth day, and on 3<sup>rd</sup> December when they shared their experiences with those trainees who did not sit this course.

A research study is being conducted by getting feedback from the students before and after the course. This study aims at assessing the impact of Vipassana on value systems. Filming was also done during the course for a proposed film on the impact of Vipassana on police personnel.

A regular interaction with these students will be maintained in the next few months of their training in the

Police Training College. An assistant teacher will visit PTC every week and conduct a group sitting and clarify any doubts. Daily meditation will also be incorporated in their training schedule.

## PUBLICATION OF MYANMAR TIPITAKA

Vipassana Research Institute (VRI) has published forty-one volumes of the Pali *Tipijaka* as well as seven volumes of the *J±taka a±hkhath±* in Myanmar script. The Corporate Body of the Buddha Educational Foundation at Taipei, Taiwan, came forward with the generous offer to print 3000 copies of these books for free distribution to the monasteries and venerable *bhikkhus* in Myanmar and worldwide. The entire work of transcription, proof-reading, editing, data-entry and typesetting was done by VRI and the final book sent to Taiwan for printing. The printed Pali *Tipijaka* volumes have been shipped to Myanmar.

VRI has already published the entire *Tipijaka* with commentarial literature in 140 volumes in the *Devan±gar±* script, in collaboration with The Corporate Body of Buddhist Education Foundation and has also produced the third version of the *Chaj±ha Sa±g±yana* CD-ROM containing the *Tipijaka* and allied Pali literature in seven scripts.

## NEW VIPASSANA CENTRE IN HARYANA

Vipassana Sadhana Sansthan had acquired seven acres of land in district Karnal opposite Sainik School, Kunjpura. It is about six kilometers from the Grand Trunk Road by-pass. Karnal is situated at a distance of 120 kms. from Delhi and 85 kms. from Kammaspur. Kurukshetra, another important town in Haryana, is at a distance of about 35 kms. from Karnal. Goenkaji has named the new centre as *Dhamma K±ru±ika*.

## GUJARATI VIPASSANA NEWSLETTER

The Gujarati edition of the Vipassana Newsletter (annual subscription: Rs 50/-) is being published at Rajkot. Contact *Dhamma Kojja*, Rajkot Vipassana centre for subscription.

## NEW APPOINTMENTS

### Assistant Teachers

1. Mr John Jacob, *Kottayam*
2. Dr K. Sethu, *Aleppy, Kerala*
3. Mrs Varsha Mayavanshi, *Bharuch*
4. Mr Niranjan Goyal, *Bhatinda*

### Children Course Teachers

1. Mr Birendra Bist, *Uttaranchal*
2. Mr Jesus Figueroa, *Spain*
3. & 4. Mr Philip Crooker & Mrs Susan Herendeen, *Australia*

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