

Vipassana Newsletter

In the tradition of Sayagyi U Ba Khin,

as taught by S. N. Goenka

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Vipassana Research Institute

Dhamma Giri, Igatpuri-422 403, Maharashtra

WORDS OF DHAMMA

*Sabassamapi ce vācā
anattapadasamhītā
ekam atthapadam seyyo
yam sutvā upasammati.*

—Dhammapada, 100

Better than a thousand useless words,
is a single beneficial word
by hearing which,
one becomes peaceful.

Meditation Now—Inner Peace through Inner Wisdom

Goenkaji and Mataji in Europe

August 8: Goenkaji and Mataji arrived at Brussels airport in the morning and were taken to *Dhamma Pajjota*, the Vipassana center in Belgium. In preparation for their visit, large dormitory tents, dining tents and a huge meditation tent were erected at *Dhamma Pajjota* to accommodate students from all over Europe and beyond: in all, over 800 students from 20 countries.

August 9: Goenkaji's first engagement was a press conference at the center. When asked about the purpose of his tour Goenkaji said that it was to take the message of Dhamma to the maximum number of people. He added that he was happy that the Buddha's pragmatic teaching was gaining increasing acceptance in the West and emphasized that only a healthy mind could bring peace to the world.

One journalist asked about the difference between violence and strict disciplinary action. Goenkaji explained that one should take strong physical and vocal action whenever necessary but with the base of compassion. When one lacks compassion, one's actions become violent and ineffective.

When asked about his centers, Goenkaji was quick to correct the reporter. "Vipassana centers are not my centers. They belong to the Vipassana meditators who build them and run them in accordance with the principles of Vipassana laid down by me."

Answering a question about his own advanced age and of his death, he said that the body is bound to become old, decayed and frail; it is bound to get afflicted with various illnesses but the mind remains healthy with the practice of Vipassana. Talking about fear, he said, "When one lives in the present moment, one becomes fearless."

In the television interview that followed, he exhorted viewers to give Vipassana a try. "Don't be afraid. Come and see for yourself. Vipassana is not a cult or a "foreign" faith; it is a simple mental exercise that keeps the mind healthy and happy."

One reporter asked him whether he is worried that Vipassana would not last for a long time after him. He said that he has no such worries. As long as the purity of the technique is maintained and Vipassana centers operate on a non-commercial basis, Vipassana will certainly last. The Buddha's words will act as a guiding beacon whenever there

is doubt because the meditation practice is in accordance with the words of the Buddha. He warned that merely reading the words of the Buddha would not be of much help. Without actual practice, one may misinterpret the teaching of the Buddha.

That evening he gave a well-received public talk at the Cultural Centre in the nearby city of Hasselt. The talk, entitled *Inner Peace for a Better World*, with a simultaneous translation into Dutch, attracted over 800, filling the hall.

Goenkaji said that even the word "Vipassana" was unknown to most of the world but people are slowly understanding that it is beneficial, non-sectarian, giving results here-and-now, and involves no conversion from one organized religion to another organized religion. As usual the talk was followed by a lively question and answer session.

August 10: A one-day course was organized at *Dhamma Pajjota*. Meditation cushions had been borrowed from two neighboring centers to seat the many students who came for the course. On the night before, however, a severe rainstorm flooded parts of the meditation hall tent, soaking carpets and cushions. A small crew of Dhamma servers worked all night to dry the hall and replace the carpets. At 5:00 a.m. the hall was finally ready for the 750 students and 75 servers. This was the biggest course ever held outside Asia. Goenkaji went to the hall to give Vipassana.

A film crew from Reuters news agency arrived to film the day's events, producing a five-minute news article that was sent to over 900 TV stations around the world. Subsequent local news coverage showed *Dhamma Pajjota* and extracts of the interview with Goenkaji.

Goenkaji met students for an open session of questions and answers during the lunch-break. For many students, this was their first chance to meet Goenkaji and to meditate in his presence. The international flavor of the event was clear from the variety of languages spoken and the food provided.

August 11: Sunday was reserved for meeting various trusts and groups involved in spreading Dhamma in Europe and Israel. This provided an opportunity for countries with centers and those holding noncenter courses, like Serbia, Hungary and Scandinavia, to discuss their problems and responsibilities with Goenkaji and to clear up many local issues. Goenkaji said that each of the European countries

should have a legal organization and each country should have a Vipassana center. He said that if founding a Vipassana center was beyond the current means of the trust, they should make an effort to start a Dhamma House.

He praised the unity shown by meditators. *Dhamma Pajjota* in Belgium is a wonderful example of meditators transcending national and linguistic boundaries to come together for the Dhamma. When the center was bought, most of the seed money came from the German meditators and most of the present Dhamma workers at this center are Dutch. As Goenkaji keeps saying, "True spirituality always unites people."

In the evening, Goenkaji gave an interview to a magazine columnist and also met some of the Vipassana teachers from different European countries. At 10:30 p.m. he met the building committee including two meditator architects to review the proposed building plan of *Dhamma Pajjota*.

August 12: It was the 125th day of the tour. Goenkaji gave the keynote speech to 100 participants at the Spirit in Business Conference at Vught in the Netherlands. This conference followed a similar conference in New York. Also present were about twenty-five meditators from the business world in Europe. Most of the meditators who took an active part in the conference were young entrepreneurs. After his talk, Goenkaji answered questions from the audience, which was followed by a panel discussion.

Later, Goenkaji was interviewed by a Dutch newspaper journalist, where he emphasized the role of spirituality in business. He often says, "There should be spirituality in business but we should not make a business of spirituality." Following the success of the Executive Course in Massachusetts in April 2002, a decision was made to schedule an Executive Course for businesspeople and leaders of society at *Dhamma Pajjota* from 7 to 18 May 2003. Goenkaji returned late in the evening to *Dhamma Pajjota*.

August 13: In the morning, Goenkaji gave interviews to reporters from Belgium, Holland and Germany at *Dhamma Pajjota*, and that evening he gave a public talk entitled *Ethics and Mindfulness in Business* at the Congress Hall in Cologne, Germany to over 1,000 people.

Goenkaji said that Vipassana is mindfulness of the truth inside. Greed is the root cause of all business malpractices and greed comes from lack of awareness of the truth within. There were many questions at the end of the talk followed by a press conference.

One journalist was keen to know why Goenkaji had a strict policy of not charging for his courses though it would provide financial resources to spread Vipassana far more extensively. Goenkaji said that it seemed to be a good justification to charge money but any such step is bound to harm the Dhamma. When money is involved, profit becomes the most important motive sooner or later and one starts making compromises to please the "customers". The Buddha strongly warned against making a business of Dhamma. Goenkaji returned to *Dhamma Pajjota* after midnight.

August 14: Goenkaji met press reporters in the morning and a Network television crew in the evening. Two prison directors from the Netherlands were joining the ten-day course starting on this day at *Dhamma Pajjota*. The TV reporter was keen to know about the role of Vipassana in prison reforms. Later, Goenkaji gave Anapana instructions to the students who had joined the ten-day course.

This Anapana session was Goenkaji's last formal engagement of the tour. In the past thirty-three years, Goenkaji has given hundreds of ten-day Vipassana courses to hundreds of thousands of students. The ten-day course format used by Goenkaji—and his teacher and his teacher's teacher before him—to convey the universal technique of Vipassana

taught by the Buddha has benefited people from diverse cultural backgrounds, diverse socio-economic groups and diverse religious groups throughout the world.

August 15: On the last day of his tour, Goenkaji met the European Union Commissioner of International Trade, Mr. Pascal Lamy. Goenkaji left *Dhamma Pajjota* at 6:15 a.m. and went straight to the airport. After checking in his luggage he went to the European Union (EU) Headquarters in Brussels. Mr. Lamy congratulated Goenkaji on the success of his tour in the West and told him how appropriate it was that this method of mental culture (Vipassana) was finding wider acceptance in the West.

Mr. Lamy had already studied some of the literature that he was given earlier by a Vipassana meditator. He asked Goenkaji various questions on spirituality in general and Vipassana meditation in particular. Goenkaji explained the universal and practical nature of the technique. To his question as to whether religious people are more attracted to Vipassana or non-religious ones, Goenkaji said, "Both". The religious people find elements of their own religion in Vipassana because morality, mastery over the mind and the purity of the mind are common denominators of all the religions. Non-religious people find it equally acceptable because of the scientific and practical nature of Vipassana.

Goenkaji explained the technique of Vipassana to Mr. Lamy. Breath is a universal object of concentration that is non-sectarian and is intimately related to the mind. In a Vipassana course, one progresses from the observation of breath to the equanimous awareness of sensations. Goenkaji explained in detail how Emperor Ashoka changed from "Ashoka the Cruel" to "Ashoka the Benevolent" due to the Buddha's teaching and said that if the leaders of the modern society accepted Vipassana, it would help the society in general. The meeting was scheduled for thirty minutes but Mr. Lamy asked if the meeting could go on. Since Goenkaji had checked in his luggage at the airport he could stay a little longer.

Mr. Lamy then asked Goenkaji about the socio-economic and business situation in India and in Myanmar (Burma). Goenkaji told him that he was not involved in politics or business any more and that his entire focus was spirituality. However, he praised Mr. Lamy's efforts to help the "Least Developed Countries" and his "Everything But Arms" initiative. Mr. Lamy commented, at the end of the meeting, that Goenkaji's approach of helping the individual to create a better society complemented the Western world's efforts to provide better conditions for humanity. ☸

For the complete tour report, visit www.vri.dhamma.org
and www.tour.dhamma.org

VIPASSANA IN CHINA

One of Goenkaji's most cherished wishes has been to spread Vipassana in China, a country that he calls the "abode of the largest number of human beings in today's world, and the cradle of a great human civilization since ancient times." In 2002, four more ten-day courses were conducted in China. The New York trust provided Dhamma servers, including cooking staff for all courses. The first two courses were held in August and September at the Tou-Tor-Si (Temple) in Wen Zhou, Zhe Jiang Province, a new location on the southeast coast of China. The third and fourth courses were held in October and November at Si-Zhu-Si in Huang Mei, Hubei Province, a site used last year for one course. Before 2002, seven ten-day courses have been conducted in three monasteries in four years.

THE ART OF LIVING IS THE ART OF DYING

Terrell Jones recently passed away at his home in Copper Hill, Virginia. He had suffered from cancer. Some nine years ago he discovered Vipassana, and shared it with his wife Diane. Together they became serious students, sitting and serving as much as possible. Not even the knowledge of imminent death deterred them from serving. In the few weeks before his death he and Diane were fully occupied as registrars for a noncenter course in their area.

Two weeks before he died, Diane drove Terrell 12 hours north to *Dhamma Dhar±*. They wanted to pay respects to Goenkaji and Mataji and express their gratitude for the gift of Vipassana. During their entire visit Terrell was an inspiration to all: no fear, no regrets—just joy and gratitude.

He gladly agreed to be interviewed about his feelings toward his life and his impending death. He explained that he and Diane had always wanted to find a way to reduce the attachment they had for each other, so that one of them would not suffer such deep grief at the passing of the other. They both realized that Vipassana was their answer.

They maintained their awareness of sensations in the sadness of their parting. They sat together each day, sometimes for many hours, watching the grief, the fear, the sensations, with remarkable equanimity. Terrell's most fervent wish near the end was to have a peaceful mind, full of equanimity, with a strong awareness of sensations at the moment of death, and his wish was fulfilled. Diane is sad but strong; joyful in the Dhamma; and knows her pain is less because of Dhamma.

A friend writes:

Terrell and Diane traveled to Pittsburg a week after leaving Massachusetts for a possible new therapy. He was unable to eat and very weak, too weak in fact for the therapy. When the oncologist explained to them that he would not be able to undergo this treatment, Terrell turned to Diane and asked for the Vipassana information packet they had brought for him. The doctor had previously expressed that his wife would be interested in taking a course. Terrell and Diane knew that it was time to go home. On the trip to Virginia, Terrell had moments of restlessness in the car, feeling he had things to do to "get ready." He had decided to stop taking his pain medication so that he would be clear when the end came and even without the medicine his perception of the pain was subsiding. When they arrived home, Dhamma friends came to be with them. They meditated together and encouraged Diane to take some rest.

Early the next morning Terrell was again restless. He said that he knew there were three things that he needed to remember about the practice, but he couldn't remember what they were. And he was worried that he didn't know what to do to get his final moments done right. His Dhamma sister Alta told him that he would know what to do and would show them how to do it.

With an opportunity to serve the Dhamma one last time, Terrell immediately focused his attention on his breath and began softly chanting. The words were inaudible, but there was a distinct cadence to the sound. The breathing and chanting became softer and softer, and the moment came when both Diane and Alta, who were holding his hands, felt him pass from his body. A small soft final breath came out. For Diane it was a moment of joy: Terrell had passed away just as he had hoped, fully aware and in the understanding of *anicca*. That evening, as she was meditating, Terrell's chanting was passing through her mind, and she realized that he had been chanting the Triple Gem, the three things he needed to remember.

VIPASSANA WORKSHOPS

The following workshops have been organized in 2003:

Dhamma Tapovana, Igatpuri

AT Workshop: 20 April to 1 May

Workshop for Trustees and Dhamma Workers: 2 to 7 May

CCT Workshop: 8 to 11 May

Dharmashāga, Nepal Vipassana Centre, Kathmandu:

"Ghar Ghar mein Pali" Workshop: 1 to 11 October 2003 -

Workshop for Assistant Teachers: 12 to 16 October

Workshop for Trustees and Dhamma workers: 17 to 19 October.

(These workshops will start at 8:00 p.m. on the first day and end at 11:00 a.m. on the last day.)

Logicstat Farmhouse, Delhi

'Value Inculcation Through Vipassana' workshop: 15 to 29 May

Workshop for Assistant Teachers: 21 to 26 October

Workshop for Trustees and Dhamma workers: 21 to 26 October

Dhamma Khetta, Hyderabad (A.P.)

Children course Workshop: 11 to 18 May.

CHILDREN COURSES IN MUMBAI

Date	Place	Eligibility	Registration
2-2-2003	Matunga	Std. V to VII	30 and 31-1-2003
9-2-2003	Andheri	8 to 12 years	6 and 7-2-2003
9-2-2003	Ulhasnagar	8 to 12 years	6 and 7-2-2003

Course Timing: 8.30 a.m. to 2.30 p.m. **Tel. No. for Registration:** 26834820 and 22812416. (10 a.m. to 12 noon and 4 to 8 p.m.) **Venues:** **Matunga:** Amulakh Amichand Vidyalaya, Kidwai Road, Near S.N.D.T. College, King's Circle, Matunga (C.R.). **Andheri:** Dadasaheb Gaikwad Sansthan, Ambedkar Road, Four Bungalows, Near RTO Corner, Andheri (W). **Ulhasnagar:** RKT College, Shivaji Chowk, Ulhasnagar-3.

GOENKAJI'S DISCOURSES ON TELEVISION

Goenkaji's discourses in Hindi are being broadcast on **Aastha** TV channel daily from 10:00 to 10:20 a.m. and 3:00 to 3:20 a.m.

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IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT: Vipassana Newsletter or Patrika is being sent to all new students in India free of charge as a special privilege. If you wish to continue receiving privilege copies of the Newsletter in 2003, you are requested to cut this portion and send it, along with the pasted label on the reverse, to VRI, Patrika Section, Dhamma Giri, Igatpuri 422 403. Otherwise, it will be assumed that you do not wish to receive the Newsletter and further copies will not be sent. You can also choose to become a lifetime or annual subscriber of the Vipassana Newsletter.

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NEW VIPASSANA CENTER IN BRAZIL

The newly-born *Associação Vipassana do Brasil* is joyful to announce the acquisition of 82 acres of land, where it will soon start building the first Vipassana Meditation Center in South America. Goenkaji has given it the name *Dhamma Santi* (Peace of Dhamma).

The site is twenty minutes from the historic university town of Vassouras. It is two hours from Rio de Janeiro and four hours from São Paulo and Belo Horizonte, three major cities of Brazil. This is the most populous part of Brazil and the area with the most meditators.

The land is in a steep, grassy canyon with fruit trees, birds and butterflies. It lies at the end of a quiet country road surrounded by pristine, protected rainforest. Though the terrain is rugged, there are enough plateaus to allow building. There are two water sources and an excellent climate.

The property has one small house in good condition and four cottages needing repair. A local builder has been contacted and construction is planned for October. Old students from abroad with building know-how are welcome to come and help build. And, of course, once the center is ready for courses, they are also welcome to come to sit and serve. The goal is to have courses by January, perhaps in tents, but May is a second possibility.

In Brazil, Vipassana meditation has grown from one course in 1994 to six in 2001. Over 700 people have attended courses—186 in 2001, compared to 65 five years earlier. This base of local meditators has enabled the association to raise part of the \$34,000 needed to buy the land from *dāna*, the rest coming from loans and donations from old students abroad.

There are five committees managing the Dhamma work in Brazil. The Translating and Library Committee has done translation work into Portuguese including most of the public web site, *the Discourse Summaries*, a local newsletter, *Vipassana Newsletter*, *The Art of Living*, *Mahāsatipajjhāna Sutta* and *Satipajjhāna Sutta Discourses*. A library has also been established for old students. Current activities include a regular schedule of ten-day courses at a rented site and group sittings in Rio and Paraná.

For more information, please contact: Associação Vipassana do Brasil, R. Aurea, 48 - Santa Teresa, Rio de Janeiro, RJ CEP 20240-210, Brazil. Tel: [55] (21) 2221-4985; e-mail: info@br.dhamma.org Website: <http://dhammaespanol.org/portuguese/brazilcenter/>

VIPASSANA IN PAKISTAN

A group of Vipassana meditators in Karachi have decided to organize the first ten-day Vipassana course in Pakistan. The venue of the course is a Christian seminary in Karachi (Franciscan Friary, Block-13-D2, Gulshan Iqbal, Karachi 75300) and the course will be held from 26 February to 9 March 2003.

These meditators have a group sitting every second and last Sunday from 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. at the residence of Mr Aziz, Abdul: 282, Lane-18, Sharfabad, Karachi 74800, Pakistan. Tel: 493-0372, 493-0997. Mobile: (0333) 213-2636.

For more details about the course, please contact Mr Aziz Abdu at the above address or Mr Zahid Yezdan, e-mail: zahid_yezdan1508@hotmail.com

NEW VRI PUBLICATIONS

१. कल्याणमित्र सत्यनारायण गोयन्का (व्यक्तित्व और कृतित्व) बालकृष्ण गोयन्का (Rs 35/-)
 २. धन्य बाबा (आत्म कथन) आचार्य सत्यनारायण गोयन्का (Rs 35/-)
 ३. जागे अंतर्बोध (मराठी) (Rs 35/-)
 4. The Importance of Vedanā and Sampajañña (Rs 110/-)
 5. Effect of Vipassana Meditation on Quality of Life, Subjective Well-Being, and Criminal Propensity among Inmates of Tihar Jail, Delhi by Dr Amulya Khurana and Prof. P. L. Dhar (Rs 60/-)
 6. For the Benefit of Many by S. N. Goenka (Rs 120/-) (Collection of inspiring discourses for old students)
 7. Manual of Vipassana Meditation by U Ko Lay (Rs 65/-)
- Payment must be made only by crossed bank draft payable at Igatpuri in favour of VRI. Please add postage and handling charges as follows:

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NEW APPOINTMENTS

ASSISTANT TEACHERS

1. Mrs Mayuri Yogesh Shah, *Baroda*
2. Mrs Chandrika Kamdar, *Mumbai*
4. Mr Umesh Gor, *Bhuj*
3. Mr Fabrizio Ruggiero, *Italy*

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