

Vipassana Newsletter

In the tradition of Sayagyi U Ba Khin,

as taught by S. N. Goenka

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Vipassana Research Institute

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WORDS OF DHAMMA

idha nandati pecca nandati, Here one is happy, hereafter one is happy,
katapuñño ubhayattha nandati; The doer of meritorious deeds is happy in both existences.
puññaṃ me katanti nandati, “Good have I done” (thinking thus), he is happy,
bhiiyo nandati saggatim gato. He is happier still when he goes to a blissful state.
—Dhammapada 18

SERVING YOURSELF AND OTHERS

by S. N. Goenka

(The following talk was given by Goenkaji to Dhamma servers in Kaoshiung, Taiwan in July 1996. It has been slightly adapted for the Newsletter.)

My dear Dhamma servers:

During the last year, many of you have given such worthy service that Vipassana has started to spread on this island of Dhamma. For a Vipassana meditator to progress on the path of purification, Dhamma service is important. The Buddha’s teaching is that you should serve yourself first to be able to serve others. If you want to purify your mind but do not make efforts to generate love and compassion for others, if you do not try to help them to come out of suffering, you are certainly not progressing on the path of Dhamma.

Continue to purify your mind and also help others to purify their own minds. You should not forget others while purifying your mind, but it is not healthy to try to help others without purifying yourself. If you are not strong, how can you help another weak person to become strong?

I know from my own experience and from the experience of so many of my students that when you serve others in Dhamma, your own meditation becomes stronger and the process of purification becomes more effective. When you help others to progress in Dhamma, you develop your *pāramī* of *dāna*. Of all the gifts, the gift of Dhamma is the highest. Every donation you make is helpful to you, no doubt, but this donation gives you the maximum benefit because you are giving something of maximum value to the recipient. Someone who receives the gift of Dhamma gets the path of purification and starts to come out of all the miseries of life. Therefore, the Buddha announced, *Sabba dānaṃ dhammadānaṃ jināti*—The donation of Dhamma is the highest donation.

During a course it appears that only the Teacher is

giving the *dāna* of Dhamma but actually Dhamma cannot be given unless there are servers to help, so the servers share in the process. If there were nobody to manage or to prepare food, how could a Vipassana course be held? The *dāna* of Dhamma is a cooperative effort by the Teacher and the servers, and the servers also receive the fruit of Dhamma *dāna*.

Sometimes, people tell me, “It is wonderful that you have been successful in distributing Dhamma single-handedly to so many people around the world.” I reply that I have not done this single-handedly. I have only two hands but Dhamma has thousands of hands—the hands of the Dhamma servers.

When I first went to India, I was unsure whether I could teach Dhamma there. This technique makes a deep operation and purifies the mind at the root level. To learn it, residential courses are essential, but I had no one to help me arrange the necessary facilities. Fortunately, a distant relative of mine from Myanmar offered to assist, and it was because of his great service that the first course was arranged. And then, the Wheel of Dhamma started rotating once again in the country of its origin. Later on, others who had participated in courses offered their services, and thus, courses could be held not only in India but around the world.

Whenever I remember the man who managed the first course in India, I feel very grateful to him. Can anyone measure the merits that this person acquired in arranging the first Vipassana course outside Myanmar? Then, a large number of meditators around the world started helping. Can anyone measure the merits that these servers have acquired by organizing Dhamma courses for suffering people? That is why I say that every Dhamma server participates in this great donation of Dhamma around the world.

In daily life, there are many ups and downs. To

maintain equanimity despite these vicissitudes and to generate love and compassion is the training of Vipassana. When Vipassana meditators give Dhamma service, they learn in a healthy atmosphere how to apply Dhamma in life.

While giving service you come across different types of meditators. Some may be lazy or talkative or rude. Sometimes an immature Dhamma server reacts in kind and replies rudely, or behaves like a jailer. But you are trained not to become angry in spite of any mistakes made by the students. Instead, you try maintain a balanced mind filled with love and compassion. You keep making mistakes and correcting yourself, and in this way you learn how to face unwanted situations equanimously. In the atmosphere of a Dhamma centre or course it is easier to learn how to face various situations, and then, you can start to apply this wisdom in your daily life. This is a training ground for each Dhamma server to learn how to live a good life.

The Buddha said that a good Dhamma person has two qualities: the quality of selflessly serving others and the quality of gratitude for help received. These two qualities are rare. A Dhamma server has the opportunity to develop both. You practice serving others without expecting anything in return; and you start to develop a feeling of gratitude towards the Buddha, who discovered this wonderful technique and gave it to the world, and towards the chain of teachers, who maintained this technique in its pristine purity. One feels like repaying the debt of gratitude by serving others in order to fulfil the mission of the Teacher.

One feels so happy and contented serving others and helping them to come out of their misery. Therefore, Dhamma service works both ways: It helps others and it helps the Dhamma server too.

May you all gain strength in Dhamma for your own benefit, and may you continue to serve others for the good and benefit of so many.

May the Dhamma of purification given by the Buddha spread not only in this island of Dhamma, the island of Taiwan, but may it also arise and spread in the country of its origin and from there may it spread around the world.

May the island of Taiwan become a beacon of Dhamma and spread the light of wisdom throughout the world.

May all be happy, be peaceful, be liberated.

Bhavatu sabba maṅgalaṃ! 🙏

Questions and Answers with Goenkaji: Dhamma Ābhā, Thailand, 3 July 2001

Question: Why are we asked not to stay at a sensation until it passes away?

Goenkaji: Sometimes, a gross sensation may take a long time to pass away. If you stay with a gross sensation for a long time, the mind may start to become gross. We want the mind to become sharper and sharper and subtler and subtler, so that it feels every kind of sensation. If you observe a gross sensation for a very long time and your mind becomes gross; then you jump from one gross sensation to another gross sensation, and the mind remains

gross. A gross mind cannot feel all kinds of sensations. You miss subtle sensations.

Make sure that you don't condemn people working with gross sensations. But understand that moving your attention throughout the body enables you to feel different sensations all over the body. The mind becomes capable of feeling both gross and subtle sensations. Remain equanimous and keep moving. Don't get stuck at any one place.

Question: Is a free flow on the surface of the body the same as *bhaṅga*?

Goenkaji: The surface free flow is partial *bhaṅga*, not total *bhaṅga*. In total *bhaṅga*, there is no solidity, inside or outside. Everywhere, there is dissolution.

Question: How do old *sankhāras* get eradicated?

Goenkaji: You have a stock of old *sankhāras*, which is like the fuel of a fire, and these keep the fire burning. You have a heap of old fuel and you keep adding new fuel. This means the new fuel is used and the old one does not get used. But when you stop giving new fuel, the old fuel will get consumed and will be eradicated after some time. Don't generate new *sankhāras* and the old ones will automatically get eradicated. 🙏

Global Pagoda Update

From the jungles of Java to the snow-covered wastes of Mongolia, over the centuries, monuments have arisen bearing silent witness to the power of the Buddha's teaching. Among them are stupas or pagodas, which originally took the simple form of a mound, as memorials to the great teacher, Siddhattha Gotama. By their graceful forms, they serve as visible reminders of the Path of Liberation, the teaching of the Buddha.

In recent years, inspired by Goenkaji, a foundation was formed to undertake the monumental task of building a Global Pagoda in India, the home of the Buddha. This pagoda will be an expression of gratitude towards Gotama the Buddha and the countless teachers who have preserved the teaching in its pristine purity.

The Global Pagoda will be similar in size and form to the great Shwedagon Pagoda in Myanmar. Towering over 96 meters (325 feet), it will house a stone dome structure within, creating a hall where thousands of meditators can sit together.

Below the hall will be an information gallery exhibiting the authentic life of the Buddha and the benefits of the practice of Vipassana during his lifetime. These public displays are intended to help correct historical misconceptions about the teaching of the Buddha. There will also be a Dhamma library, seminar rooms and facilities to carry out research work. For more detailed information, visit: <<http://www.globalpagoda.org>>. ♦

FIRST COURSE IN KALYAN PRISON

The first ten-day Vipassana course was conducted in Kalyan Prison from 4 to 15 April 2003. Forty-two inmates completed the course.

THE MIRACLE OF DHAMMA

I would like to tell you about the miracle of this practice, which came to help me in the most devastating event of my entire life.

I am a widow with two children. One Sunday evening, I received a call that my son was killed in a car accident. He was 30 years old. He was my best friend. We had a perfect connection in Dhamma, in art and on all issues of life.

My daughter was visiting me when that striking news came and we both were paralyzed. At that moment, the first thoughts were: "It is over, it is a drastic *anicca* and there is nothing we can do." The initial shock of the news made the mind react with tremendous pain. This immediately manifested in the body and made me very weak on top of my chronic fatigue syndrome.

The first day I cried several times but I noticed that the crying only lasted several seconds because, I guess, the mind automatically went to the sensations; in contrast to the past when I used to cry for many hours.

But the second day, something amazing happened. Suddenly I felt a lot of peace, full acceptance of the event, and the mind did not feel like rolling in grief; it was like I had finished several days of Anapana. I did not understand what happened to me, as I had never experienced such a state of mind after stress. In fact, I used to be a highly emotional person and I was asking myself whether I had become insensitive or indifferent?

In all these years of practice, I did not really notice a clear equanimity in the ups and downs of every day life. But it seems to me, that through correct and persistent practice in time, the equanimity accumulated silently, drop by drop, into the subconscious. Suddenly, after the shock, it rose to the conscious level and filled it up.

It is amazing! Two months have passed since the event, and it's still there. Of course, from time to time, sudden memory comes striking like a knife into my solar plexus and into my chest, but because of the practice, the mind immediately remembers, "Breath in, breath out, feel sensations in the palms" and in three or four breaths, I am out of pain for long periods of time.

What an extraordinary tool we have! Some people thought that I might be in denial or I may be suppressing the crying, perhaps to show what a great Vipassana meditator I am, but I have analyzed myself and I did not find a trace of such thoughts. My experience is a real proof that the technique of Vipassana works miracles. The proof is not for me, as I never had any doubt about it, but for those who still have some skepticism about it.

My son kept excellent *sīla* for eight years. He also had a very deep understanding of Dhamma with no trace of doubt and was a very generous and equanimous person. I hope that all those qualities will give him the opportunity to become a human being again in this Buddha Sāsana so that he will be able to continue the purification of mind.

I feel so honored and so blessed to have met Goenkaji as my teacher from whom I have learned so much. I wish him a long and healthy life. I give my deepest gratitude to Gotama the Buddha, the chain of teachers and especially to Goenkaji for giving me such an invaluable gift. ♦

CHILDREN COURSES IN BHUTAN

Six children's courses were conducted in Bhutan from 25th April to 2nd May 2003 at Gomtu, Samtse, and Thimphu. More than 400 children attended the first five one-day courses. The fifth course was a two-day course, which was attended by 478 children. The response from the children was very inspiring; they meditated very seriously right from the first session.

The Minister of Education and the Director General have decided to incorporate Vipassana and Anapana in their far-sighted value-based education programme. The Minister attended the last two hours of the two-day camp, which was followed by a question-answer session. A venerable monk also attended the two-day course at Thimphu as an observer. After every Anapana course, a presentation on Vipassana was organized for all the teachers of the school.

Group sittings were conducted before the start of every Anapana Camp, where not only all the teachers who were old meditators participated, but also the Director General (Education) and Joint Director participated. The local meditators have decided to organize regular group sittings in their areas (Thimphu, Samtse and Gomtu). ♦

VIPASSANA FILM IN SRI LANKA

The documentary film on Vipassana in Tihar Prison, *Doing Time Doing Vipassana* was dubbed in Sinhala and telecast on Wesak Day, May 15th 2003 by Rupavahini Corporation at their expense. There was an enthusiastic feedback by the general public, which has resulted in a lot of interest in the following ten-day courses.

Local prison authorities and officials were informed about the telecast, which may inspire them to organize a prison course in the near future in Sri Lanka. ♦

VIPASSANA WORKSHOPS IN 2003

(For contact details of venues of the workshops, see the enclosed Schedule of Vipassana Courses).

Logicstat Farmhouse, Delhi

Workshop for Assistant Teachers: October 21 to 26.

Workshop for Trustees and Dhamma workers: October 21 to 26.

Dharmashrīnga, Kathmandu

"Ghar Ghar mein Pali" Workshop: October 1 to 11.

Workshop for Assistant Teachers: October 12 to 16.

Workshop for Trustees and Dhamma workers: October 17 to 19 (These workshops will start at 8:00 p.m. on the first day and end at 11:00 a.m. on the last day.)

CHILDREN'S COURSES IN MUMBAI

<u>Date</u>	<u>Place</u>	<u>Eligibility</u>	<u>Registration</u>
8-6	Andheri	Std. 5 to 7	5 & 6-6
8-6	Ulhasnagar	Std. 5 to 7	5 & 6-6
29-6	Matunga	Std. 5 to 7	26 & 27-6
13-7	Andheri	13-16 yrs	10 & 11-7
13-7	Ulhasnagar	13-16 yrs	10 & 11-7

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: Andheri: Dadasaheb Gaikwad Sansthan, Ambedkar Road, Four Bungalows, Near RTO Corner, Andheri (W).

Ulhasnagar: RKT College, Shivaji Chowk, Ulhasnagar-3.

Matunga: Amulakh Amichand Vidyalaya, Kidwai Road, Near S.N.D.T. College, King's Circle, Matunga (C.R.).

GOENKAJI'S PROGRAM ON ZEE TV

Zee TV will be broadcasting a program called *Urjaa* featuring Goenkaji every Sunday at 9:00 a.m. from June 2003. Goenkaji will be answering questions about the different aspects of Dhamma and Vipassana in this program.

NEW VIPASSANA CENTERS

Ontario, Canada: The Ontario Vipassana Foundation is happy to announce Canada's third Vipassana center, *Dhamma Torana*, Auspicious Gateway to Dhamma. Situated in Southern Ontario, the most densely populated area of Canada, it is one hour from Greater Toronto, an urban area of 5 million people. Toronto is listed by the United Nations as having more religions and cultures represented than any other city in the world—a perfect place to bring the Buddha's nonsectarian technique of Vipassana.

The property lies in a predominantly rural agricultural setting surrounded mostly by farms. Its 141 acres of forest and park-like land, has been owned by the Boy Scouts of Canada since the early 1960's. One feels peaceful as one wanders over the land and through its old-growth forests. There are many open spaces with 100 year old, 80-foot trees spreading their branches over large areas. In late spring, the forest floor is covered with a blanket of wildflowers. The land is completely flat except for a deep gorge with a creek that runs through it, dividing off about one third of the property into a separate section. Many deer and other wildlife inhabit this Canadian Jetavana-like parkland. Soon, they will be joined by silent meditators.

The center's special zoning allows the Ontario Vipassana Foundation to build any number of buildings with no limit to the number of students. At present, with renovations to existing buildings and the construction of a Dhamma hall and a dining hall, the center will be able to accommodate up to 40 meditators plus staff in the winter and more in the warm months when camping is an option. There are beautiful, secluded and quiet areas where tents can be set up for old students. Eventually the center could comfortably serve 120 students, plus servers on the larger southern part of the land and perhaps 100 students at a long-course site on the smaller part, north of the gorge.

May those who serve *Dhamma Torana* grow strong in their practice and help spread Dhamma throughout this part of Canada.

Illinois, USA: Meditators in the Illinois area are pleased to announce a new Vipassana center, *Dhamma Pakāsa*, Light of Dhamma. The property is located in Pecatonica, Illinois, 20 minutes west of Rockford and two hours from Chicago, Milwaukee, and Madison.

Dhamma Pakāsa is peaceful and tranquil, with many ponds and beautiful shaded walking areas. Buildings on the 20-acre site include a large four-bedroom, three-bath house, a guesthouse, an enormous barn and many outbuildings of various sizes. Initial development plans include expanding a three-car garage for use as a meditation hall and converting the barn into residences.

The purchase price is \$450,000 and an additional \$100,000 will go to renovations. For information, please visit <www.pakasa.dhamma.org>. ♦

HINDI PATRIKA ON THE WEBSITE

Current and past issues of the Hindi Vipassana Patrika can be downloaded from the VRI website:

www.vri.dhamma.org/NewslettersHindi/index.html

www.vri.dhamma.org/NewslettersHindi/oldissueshindi.html

NEW RESPONSIBILITIES

Ācāryas:

Mr. Don & Mrs. Sally McDonald

To serve Malaysia and Hong Kong and Worldwide Course Statistics

NEW APPOINTMENTS

Assistant Teachers

1. Mr. Upendrakumar Patel, *Mehsana*

2. Mrs Indu Gala, *Hyderabad*

3. Mr Chong Ming Jue, *USA/Singapore*

Children Course Teachers

1. Mr. Mohan Vikas Dewan, *Tripura*

2. Ko Zaw Than Htwe, *Myanmar*

3. Ko Zaw Than Htoo (a) Ko Lay, *Myanmar*

4. U Nay Win, *Myanmar* 5. Maung Myat thu, *Myanmar*

6. Ma Khin Khin Yi, *Myanmar*

7. Khin Kyu Kyu Khain, *Myanmar*

8. Ko Thein Htwe, *Myanmar* 9. Ko Hla Min, *Myanmar*

10. Ko Htay Thaug, *Myanmar* 11. Ko Nay Win, *Myanmar*

12. Ms. Andrea Gerber, *Germany*

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