

Vipassana Newsletter

In the tradition of Sayagyi U Ba Khin, as taught by S. N. Goenka

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WORDS OF DHAMMA

*Sabbadānaṃ dhammadānaṃ jināti,
sabbarasaṃ dhammaraso jināti;
sabbaratiṃ dhammarati jināti,
taṇhakkhayo sabbadukkhaṃ jināti.*

The gift of Dhamma excels all other gifts.
The flavour of Dhamma excels all other flavours.
The delight in Dhamma surpasses all delights.
The destruction of craving overcomes all suffering.

—Dhammapada 354

THE GIFT OF DHAMMA

by S. N. Goenka

Goenkaji has often talked about the gifts of *dāna*, the mental volition of the giver and the many ways to give *dāna*. He talks about the supreme gift of *Dhammadāna*, the transmission of the Dhamma in its pure form from teacher to student through the generations. In addition, he points out that there are ways to share in the giving of *Dhammadāna*, even for those who are not teachers. Following is the first part of a selection of his words on this topic, drawn from various articles and talks and adapted for the Newsletter.

Dhammadāna

From a talk given by S. N. Goenka on January 15, 1976, on the occasion of the founding of Dhamma Thalī, Jaipu, Vipassana Centre, Rajasthan.

The taste of Dhamma surpasses all other tastes. Other tastes do not quench craving, they increase it. Only the taste of Dhamma puts an end to all craving. Dhamma quenches craving; therefore, *dhammadāna* is the best *dāna*.

The gift of Dhamma surpasses all other gifts. Giving *dāna* towards a person's worldly needs, although beneficial, gives a temporary benefit—a limited benefit. But the gift of Dhamma gives enormous benefit, boundless benefit. By this *dāna*, from whatever misery one becomes freed, this freedom is forever. From whatever bondage one becomes freed, this freedom is forever. Hence the *dāna* of Dhamma is greater than any other *dāna*.

The *dāna* of Dhamma is given by teaching the Dhamma. Also, any contribution we make in any manner towards spreading the teaching of the Dhamma is *dhammadāna*. Therefore, whatever contribution one

makes towards having a meditation center built, for organizing and maintaining it, serving courses or providing other requirements is all *dhammadāna*, the *dāna* that is superior to all other *dāna*.

If we give food, the hunger of the recipient is appeased. In return, the law of nature, or Dhamma, will automatically help appease our hunger when we are hungry. This is a benefit. Similarly, whatever other worldly *dāna* we give, the resultant fruits will be of similar nature. They will give worldly benefit.

When we help a person to come out of craving, aversion and ignorance, the resultant fruit is not ordinary because the *dāna* is not ordinary. The *dāna* of Dhamma is supramundane. Its resultant fruits are also supramundane. It is a *dāna* that will assist us in coming out of all worldly bondage.

When we contribute towards this great cause, the kind of help we give is not significant. What is important is the volition with which we give. We should give with a Dhamma volition, thinking, "I have this facility, this capacity, this resource. I shall contribute so much of it for the well-being of people. May there be true well-being. Whatever well-being may be achieved by various other kinds of *dāna*, in comparison, the well-being achieved by this *dāna* is boundless. There cannot be a better way to use my capacity, my resources, my wealth." When we give *dāna* with this Dhamma volition, we pave the path of our own progress. Whatever obstacles we face in our meditation, our practice, are the result of our own past *kamma*. When we help others to become liberated, the resultant fruit will help us to overcome the obstacles we face. All the hindrances to our liberation will be removed.

If even one person gets liberated sitting in a cell or cave on this land, if even one person realizes *nibbāna* meditating on this land, what greater delight could this land have? What greater rapture could this land experience? What greater welfare could this land aspire to?

This land will be venerated. When construction work takes place, it will cause hardship to the visible and invisible beings here. This will happen. But the work has begun with wholesome volition, with *dhammadhātu*. The land has been venerated, all its inhabitants have been venerated; they will be happy.

Something constructive, beneficial and good will take place here. The people who work here should generate goodwill towards all the visible and invisible beings whenever they work. May no being knowingly be killed. We should not knowingly cause hardship to any being.

“The good of all, the welfare of all” should be the volition. If unknowingly some hardship is caused, may those who have suffered share our merits, our good deeds, the Dhamma accumulated by us. May they also be happy.

Make sure that all the work is done with such feelings of goodwill, with a pure mind. The land is pure, the meditators who work are pure, their minds are pure; the wealth that flows in is pure. The results will be pure; they are bound to be pure.

The Dāna of Financial Support

It is a great Dhammadāna to contribute financially to creating and maintaining a meditation center where the pure vibrations of Dhamma will support a meditator. In the ten-day discourses, Goenkaji tells the story of Anāthapiṇḍika, a multimillionaire in the days of the Buddha. This person was actually named Sudatta but he received the title Anāthapiṇḍika because he gave dāna so generously.

The title “Anāthapiṇḍika” comes from *anātha*, meaning those who are very poor and *piṇḍika*, meaning one who gives food. Because he gave so much food to all the hungry people, this was his title. He lived in Sāvatti, which was the most populous city in India in those days. But there were branches of his business throughout the country and even beyond, in different countries. He had a rule that wherever his office or branch was, nobody should go hungry, people should be given food. But still he didn’t know Dhamma.

One day he came into contact with Buddha. That means, he came into contact with Dhamma, Vipassana. By practicing, he purified his mind and experienced a dip in the first stage of *nibbāna*. For the first time, he experienced the truth beyond mind and matter and became a totally changed person.

The purpose of giving donation is not to build one’s ego but rather to deflate it, to dissolve it. He now thought, “All this money that has come to me is because of my good *karmas* from the past that have ripened now. It must be used for the good of others. Of course, as a

householder, I must make use of it for my own maintenance, for the maintenance of all those who are depending on me. But the rest of it must go for the good of others, for the good of others.” He now understood this.

The good of others—what is the real good of others? I give food to a hungry person. I should give; this is good. But the next day, this person is hungry again. I give water to a thirsty person, but after some time again he becomes thirsty. I give medicine to a sick person but he may contract another disease, or suffer a recurrence of the same disease. I may give clothes to a naked person but after some time the clothes become worn out, torn, and again he is naked. I am not helping people to come out of all their miseries. If they get Dhamma, if they get this wonderful technique of Vipassana—oh, they can come out of all their misery! They can become totally liberated from misery—misery that they have been encountering for life after life, life after life. They can come out of it. Dhamma should go to each and every suffering person. Besides all this giving of material *dāna*, this *dāna* is most important, the *dāna* of Dhamma is the highest *dāna*.

This man went to Buddha, who at that time was living in Rājgiri. Anāthapiṇḍika paid respects to him, and asked, “Sir, why not come to Sāvatti? A large number of people live there. All are miserable—rich or poor. If you have a meditation center there, many people will benefit, sir. Please come.”

Buddha smiled, so he understood that Buddha had agreed. Anāthapiṇḍika returned home to look for a center, a place where Buddha could start teaching Dhamma to the people. A meditation center should not be in the midst of the city, with much noise and disturbance. It should not be so far away that people cannot go there. Looking for a proper place, peaceful and yet not very far from the city, he came across a garden, a park. It was very calm, very quiet, very congenial for meditation. He inquired: “Who is the owner of this park?”

He came to know that the owner was Prince Jeta. He went to him and said, “Sir, I want to buy your park.” But the prince became angry, replying, “I am not looking to sell my park. It is for my own amusement. I won’t sell it.”

“Please, sir, I have to buy it, at any price.”

Just to get rid of Anāthapiṇḍika, the prince said, “You know the price of this land? You have to spread gold sovereigns over the entire land. This is the price.”

“The deal is done. I will spread gold sovereigns.”

He brought cartloads of sovereigns, and started spreading them on the land. When the prince saw what Anāthapiṇḍika was doing, he said, “Have you gone mad? No land can be this valuable. What are you doing?”

Anāthapiṇḍika replied, “No, I am not mad. This land is going to become so valuable. Buddha is going to come here and teach the wonderful Dhamma. All my wealth is nothing compared to what is gained if one person gets Dhamma, gets Vipassana, and comes out of misery. And

I know that not one but thousands upon thousands of people will benefit.”

“Very well,” said the prince. “Let the rest of the price be my donation. The land is yours.”

On this land, Anāthapiṇḍika built a meditation center where 10,000 people could live—where they could stay and meditate, learning Dhamma. His volition was to serve others. He had been giving *dāna* even previously, before he learned Dhamma. Now his *dāna* was to help more and more people get the benefit of Dhamma. He was giving—not to inflate his ego but to dissolve it, just to serve others.

Later, because of some *karmas* of the past, for a short time, this multimillionaire lost all his money. When he was wealthy, he would come to the center every morning and evening to meditate. As a householder, he understood, “I should not go to the center empty-handed. I must offer something for the meditators.” Every time he came, he brought something for the meditators. Now he was a pauper; he had nothing to bring. Then a thought came to his mind. Behind his house, he had a small garden. In that garden, he had accumulated fertile soil from different parts of India. Now he took two handfuls of that soil. He came to the center and put it at the foot of a tree, saying, “May this tree grow, and under its shade may someone get Dhamma, may someone be able to meditate.”

Whether the gift is a handful of soil or millions of rupees, it makes no difference; it is the volition that counts. After some time, Anāthapiṇḍika regained his wealth and started giving donations as before. But he understood, “Whatever I give, the amount is immaterial. My volition must be a Dhamma-volition: I give for the good of others, for the benefit of others, not expecting anything in return.” ☸

NEW VIPASSANA CENTER IN ISRAEL

The Israel Vipassana Trust has located a site for a possible center and is now trying to purchase it. The 25-acre property is located on a secluded hill only about an hour from Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. It has five existing buildings and all the necessary infrastructure is in place.

Unusually for Israel, the seller is a private individual. As a result, there will be less difficulty in purchasing the land and obtaining approval to use it for a meditation center. The asking price is US\$ 875,000. With extra expenses of taxes and necessary construction, the Trust estimates that the total cost of establishing the center would be about US\$ 1,250,000, a very reasonable amount by local standards.

Interest in Vipassana continues to be strong in Israel, with long waiting lists despite a year-round schedule of courses. In this strife-torn land, many are eager to find peace within. Unfortunately, the current economic difficulties make raising the money for the purchase a real challenge. Nevertheless, local meditators are doing all they can to make sure that this opportunity does not slip away.

For more information, contact: Israel Vipassana Trust, Tel: 972-3-612-9811, Email: ivt@netvision.net.il Website: <http://www.il.dhamma.org/os/center/centerForm-eng.asp>

NEW VIPASSANA CENTER IN CALIFORNIA

The Southern California Vipassana Trust has purchased land and buildings for a new meditation center in the high desert city of Twenty-nine Palms, California, close to Joshua Tree National Park. Goenkaji has named the new center *Dhamma Vaddhana* (Growth in Dhamma).

The 154-acre property is two-and-a-half hours east of Los Angeles, two-and-a-half hours north of San Diego, and two-and-a-half hours southwest of Las Vegas. The facilities consist of a 3,000 sq. ft. house and a 950 sq. ft. outbuilding. The land gently slopes with long desert vistas to the north and west.

The existing facilities will be remodeled to accommodate a small temporary center serving 20 to 30 students. When adequate funds are available, construction will begin on a higher portion of the property where a permanent center accommodating approximately 170 students is planned.

The acquisition of the new center follows rapid growth in the spread of Dhamma in Southern California. Over the past several years, three 10-day courses have been held at a rented facility 11 miles from the new center, attended by a total of approximately 500 students.

For more information, contact: Southern California Vipassana Center, P. O. Box 4275, Redondo Beach, CA 90277-1762, USA or Marla Sutherland, Tel: [1] (818) 882-5667; Email: mail@sutherlandphotodesign.com

VIPASSANA NEWSLETTER ON THE WEBSITE

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

<http://www.vri.dhamma.org/NewslettersHindi/index.html>

<http://www.vri.dhamma.org/newsletters/index.html>

Note: The subscription charges for the Vipassana Patrika and Newsletter have been increased because of the increased expenses of publication and dispatch.

Annual Subscription: Rs 30.00; Life Subscription: Rs 500.00

Meditators who wish to subscribe to the Vipassana Newsletter or Patrika are requested to send payment only by crossed bank draft, payable at Igatpuri to Vipassana Research Institute. Payment by cheque will not be accepted.

PROGRAMS AT DHAMMA GIRI IN DECEMBER

Dhamma Giri is closed to all visitors during the Teachers' Self-course (TSC) from 5th November to 21st December 2003. Meditators are requested not to come to *Dhamma Giri* during this period.

Programs after the TSC are as follows:

22nd to 24th December 2003: Workshop for assistant teachers (Newly appointed assistant teachers are specially requested to attend this workshop. Senior assistant teachers and teachers are also requested to participate. Please register your names in advance.)

24th December 2003: Annual VRI Research Council Meeting (starts at 9:00 a.m.)

ONE-DAY COURSE AT GLOBAL PAGODA

One-day course (for old students) has been organized on 25th December 2003 at Global Pagoda, Gorai, Mumbai. Goenkaji will be present during the course. **Contact:** Email: globalpagoda@hotmail.com Tel: 022-2845-2112, 2845-2111.

COURSE REGISTRATION CANCELLATIONS

At recent courses, both at *Dhamma Giri* and at other centres, students registered for courses have failed to show up without informing course organizers of their cancellations. Even old students and students registered for long courses have failed to inform course management of their inability to come for the course. Other students wishing to attend have been turned away as a result of apparently full registration.

In addition, the task of organizing courses becomes more difficult since many factors depend on the number of students registered: amount of food to be ordered, number of workers needed, size of site, etc.

Therefore, all students are requested to reconfirm their booking before the start of the course and inform course organizers even at the very last minute if they are unable to attend the course. Old students recommending others for Vipassana courses should ensure that the applicants follow the above guidelines.

NEW APPOINTMENTS

Assistant Teachers

Mrs. Sheela Bajaj, *Chennai*

Mr. Dong Hwan Lee & Mrs. Jeong Soo Lee, *South Korea*

VIPASSANA COURSES FOR EXECUTIVES

Ten-day courses for high-ranking government officials and business executives have been arranged as follows:

- ***Dhamma Tapovana, Igatpuri***
28 December to 8 January 2004 (English only)
(mainly for executives from the West.)
Contact: Dhamma Giri, Igatpuri 422 403
Tel. [91] (02553) 244076; Fax: (02553) 244176;
Email: info@giri.dhamma.org
- ***Dhamma Khetta, Hyderabad***
15 to 26 January 2004 (Hindi/English)
Contact: Vipassana International Meditation Centre,
Kusum Nagar, Nagarjuna Sagar Road, Hyderabad
500 070. Tel: (040) 2711-2069, 98480-91831; Fax:
(040) 24240290; Email: vimc_hyd@hotmail.com

GOENKAJI'S DHAMMA TOUR OF NORTH INDIA

Goenkaji and Mataji will be touring Delhi and Jaipur from 29 December 2003 to 10 January 2004. Their tentative itinerary is as follows:

- 30 Dec.: *Dhamma Patthāna, Kammaspur*
11 – 12 p.m. Meditation
12 – 12:45 p.m. Q&A session with Goenkaji
1 – 2 p.m. Lunch & rest
4 – 5 p.m. Public discourse for villagers
- 1 Jan.: *Dhamma Sota, Village Rahaka*
11 a.m. – 1 p.m. Meditation
1 p.m. Foundation laying of Pagoda
5 – 6 p.m. Anapana to ten-day course students.
- 2 Jan.: Talkatora Stadium
4:30 – 5:30 p.m. Meditation for old students
6:00 – 7:30 p.m. Public talk and Q&A session
- 4 Jan.: Logicstat Farms, Village Bhatti
10 a.m. – 5 p.m. One-day course (for old students only). Goenkaji will be present during the *mettā* session followed by Q&A session.
- 5 Jan.: Departure to Jaipur.
- 7 Jan.: *Dhamma Thalī*
One-day course at (for old students only).
Goenkaji will be present during the course.
- 10 Jan.: Rajmandir Hall - Meditation for old students followed by public talk and Q&A session.

For details, contact: (1) *Vipassana Sadhana Sansthan*, Hemkunt Towers, Nehru Place, New Delhi, Tel: (011) 2645-2772. (2) *Dhamma Thalī*, P. O. Box 208, Jaipur 302 001, Tel: (0141) 2680-220; Fax: 2561-283.

GOENKAJI'S INTERVIEW ON ZEE TV

Zee TV is broadcasting a program called *Urja* featuring Goenkaji every Sunday at 9:00 a.m. In this program, Goenkaji answers questions about the different aspects of Dhamma (Dharma). Meditators may inform their family and friends about the opportunity to hear Goenkaji expound on the universal Dhamma.

Questions for Goenkaji may be sent to: *Urja*, Zee TV, Post Box No. 1, Andheri (W), Mumbai 400 099.
Email: response@zeenetwork.com
(Please put 'Urja' in the subject line.)

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