



In the tradition of Sayagyi U Ba Khin, as

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WORDS OF DHAMMA

Puññañce puriso kayirā, kayirā nam punappunam; Tamhi chandam kayirātha, sukho puññassa uccayo. If a person performs a wholesome action, let him do it again and again. He should be zealous about it; blissful is the accumulation of merit.

— Dhammapada 118, Pāpavaggo

Immortal Fame of Sayagyi U Ba Khin

(Continued....)

One more important work: – The **magnificent Vipassana Pagoda** has been built in Mumbai as a **historical monument** to commemorate the work of Sayagyi U Ba Khin. This will only be used for practicing Vipassana meditation. It will help in fulfilling the Dhamma dream of Venerable Sayagyi. Thousands of Vipassana students will keep on deriving benefit from the Group Sittings and One -Day courses organized in its huge Dhamma hall. When so much benefit is attained from the Group Sitting of 50-100 students, how much more benefit can be attained by Group Sitting of thousands of students can very well be inferred. The Buddha's words **"Samagānam tapo sukho"** will actually become evident here; meditating together will prove to be very beneficial.

It is natural that doubts will arise in the minds of people not aware of the facts regarding this pagoda. They may imagine it to be a symbol of a certain sect. However, once they see that this pagoda is exclusively for practicing Vipassana meditation, and no other sectarian rites and rituals are performed here, there is not even a trace of burning incense, making offerings, ringing bells and gongs, or idol worshipping, their doubts will automatically be removed.

It is true that without giving the outer shape of a pagoda, a pillar-less huge hall could have been constructed to accommodate ten thousand people for group sitting, why then design a pagoda that may give rise to doubts about it being sectarian? This doubt will no longer be there once they become aware of the fact that this design is meant for preserving the memory of the benevolence of Myanmar for a long time. This pagoda will be a symbol of our infinite gratitude towards that Dhamma country. When the Vipassana technique was passed on from India to the neighbouring countries, the initial stupas built by the people of those countries were similar to the stupas constructed in India at that time. The reason for their similar design was that whenever the people would look at them, their heads would bow down in recognition of the benevolence of India. Similarly, whenever the people of this country will see the pagoda built after the Shwedagon pagoda, they will remember the benevolence of Myanmar for centuries. They will remember that Myanmar preserved this technique like an invaluable inheritance for a long time. They will also remember that a householder saint like Sayagyi U Ba Khin was born in Myanmar because of whose indomitable zeal the ancient technique once again returned to India and from here it spread in every part of the world enabling India to once again regain the ancient title of being the world teacher. In this sense, the pagoda will be the symbol of our gratitude and not a symbol of any sect. This pagoda will actually be a magnificent monument of the revival of Vipassana in India. This will also be a monument to the greatness of Sayagyi.

Construction of the Global Vipassana Pagoda and its Distinguishing Features

In order that this invaluable technique taught by the Buddha and the words of the Buddha may last for centuries and help the people in their welfare, there are instructions in the Buddhist literature that says so long as the body relics of the Buddha are preserved in the world, his teachings will remain intact and will continue to help people in their welfare. So, I made a strong resolve to preserve the Buddha's relics. For achieving this, a thought occurred to me for building such a stupa, which can last for centuries and meditators may derive benefit from it.

Even at the time of the Buddha, this area of Sahyadri had become a sacred land. The ascetic Bāhiya Dārucīriaya of Nālā-Sopārā had travelled to Śrāvastī on foot to meet the Buddha. He met the Buddha on the way while the latter was begging alms in the street. Learning the Dhamma from him, Daruciriya attained Nibbana. Purna, a disciple from this area, established himself on the path of the Dhamma and after becoming successful in the test given by the Buddha; he returned to this area and started teaching Dhamma to the people. The caves built at Kanheri, Kārlā, Mahākālī, Bhājā, Ajantā -Ellorā and various other monuments of Dhamma in the Sahyadri area highlight the fact that the Dhamma prospered immensely in this area. In the excavations done recently at Nala-Sopara, remains of a pagoda were found. Because of all these facts and the fact that Gorai is surrounded by seawater or Mangrove swamps (plants grown in saline water) on three sides and on its fourth side it is connected by road I was attracted towards Gorai. I had surveyed many places for construction of the pagoda before, but this I considered as the best place.

How can the Pagoda last long? While thinking about this my attention was drawn towards old pagodas. It became clear to me that the ancient pagodas built with stones etc have lasted for centuries, whereas the life of structures built with cement and concrete is only 100-200 years. So, a meeting of modern technicians, Assistant Teachers, Trustees and students was convened. With the suggestions and support of all of them, this magnificent Global Vipassana Pagoda was constructed with stones instead of cement and concrete and will last for 2000-2500 years. This will certainly be a monument to express our gratitude towards Sayagyi U Ba Khin for centuries.

There was one more reason for its construction. According to the thinking of Sayagyi U Ba Khin, the pagoda should be hollow from within, so that people can sit inside and practice Vipassana. Most of the pagodas built earlier were solid inside. But when Sayagyi built the first pagoda at his Vipassana center in Myanmar, there were cells for meditation inside it. All pagodas built at Vipassana Centers throughout the world, were constructed as a prototype of the structure built at his Vipassana Centre in Yangon to preserve his scientific thinking in this regard.

In the premises of this pagoda modelled after the Shwedagon pagoda, people who will come here because of the revival of the words of the Buddha (pariyatti), because of the glimpses from the life of the Buddha exhibited here and because of his invaluable Vipassana technique taught here will come to know its practical aspect as well as its theoretical aspect. This was another important reason to build this incomparable and long lasting pagoda.

For its construction stones were brought all the way from Jodhpur, Rajasthan-- 1000-1200 km. away from here. **Somapura** craftsmen who had specialized in temple architecture chiseled the stones in such a manner that these remain interlocked together and also could support the weight of such a huge pagoda. It was a technological feat that an immensely large hall measuring 5,648.5 square meter was constructed without the support even of a single pillar. Special scaffolding technique was used in its construction. As a result a dome was constructed in which around 8,000-10,000 people can sit and meditate together. In this sense its construction is certainly incomparable and marvellous.

In the construction of the Global Vipassana Pagoda, both ancient art and architecture and modern technology and machinery were put to use. While its structure was built by Indian artisans, its decorations were done by Burmese decorators and artists. While it was painted gold with the support of East Asian countries, the Burmese artists made the art gallery pleasing to the eye. The world's second largest moving door made in Burma of Burmese Teak wood and adorned with unique carvings and all other doors were brought from Myanmar. The largest wooden door of the world is in Burma. All doors were fitted here by the Burmese artist carpenters who also fixed the sound proof wooden boards made of Burmese teak on the floor of the Meditation Hall and in the sides of the dome. The Dhamma verses (Dohās) engraved on the granite stones on the outer walls not only look beautiful to the viewers but also inspire them. Availability of sufficient light in the pagoda, flow of sufficient air, revolving dais in the center with seating arrangements for the Acarya, and echoless sound system-all of these are the ideas of our engineers. Thus, the contribution of Indian engineers, Burmese artists, donors from all over the world and devotees in the construction of this magnificent pagoda will always be remembered.

At the end of the main road leading from the **Sāñchi Gate**, constructed near the main gate of the Essel world towards the outer limit of the pagoda area, **Myanmar Gate** has been constructed. On both sides, structures of two lions are built reflecting Burmese culture. They are known as **Chinde** in Burmese language. Around this area there will be a synopsis of pagods's hitorical points. All carvings over this gate have been done by Burmese artists. From here the marble staircase leading to the pagoda starts. The heat-proof marble slabs were also imported from Myanmar.

On both sides of the staircase, arrangements have been made for depositing visitors' valuables etc. Modern equipment has been installed for security checking at the top. A person gets entry only after security clearance. Two huge bells have been set up on two platforms constructed on both sides of the security post. Four statues of the Custodians of the Gate carry these huge bells on their shoulders. On one side there is a heavy bell weighing 18.22 metric tons which was brought all the way from Myanmar. On the other side, there is a round drum from Thailand. Visitors can climb the platform and can enjoy beating the drum. The office is situated in the ground floor under the staircase. The right hand side of the staircase has a food-court for visitors where they can sit and enjoy the wall paintings/mountings depicting Burmese culture while taking their tea and snacks.

Adjacent to the food-court is a statue of the Buddha that weighs 87.5 metric tons and is carved out of a single marble stone. The statue was carved in Myanmar and brought here with great difficulties. The Burmese artists have worked hard for nine months and have decorated this premise with various paintings and art works depicting Burmese culture

Other Attractive Features in the pagoda premises

The small pagoda towards the north of the main pagoda was first constructed as a model It has an area of 158 square meters After checking and analyzing the weight bearing capacity and strength of the stones utilized in this pagoda the main pagoda was built in that proportion. Both these pagoda will not only last for 2000-2500 years, but also are proof against bad weather, earthquakes etc.

In the dome of the small pagoda new visitors are taught to practice $\overline{A}n\overline{a}p\overline{a}na$ (the primary stage of Vipassana) every day. Each session lasts for 25 minutes. They are taught $\overline{A}n\overline{a}p\overline{a}na$ to enable them to be acquainted with the technique of vipassana and derive benefit from the practice. This will further motivate them to attend a ten-day course to get full benefit from the technique. Thus they will not only help themselves but also help others in their welfare. A Vipassana meditator can meditate in the Main Pagoda at any time.

There is a beautiful garden in front of the Eastern Gate (Gate No.1) of the Pagoda. An attractive water fountain has been built in the garden where water flows out of the hands of the water deity. Close to this a 16 meters high Ashoka Pillar constructed in Rajasthan and brought from there has been erected here. The four lions with open mouth carved on the top of this pillar symbolize the Lion's roar (*Dhammaghosa*) of the Buddha. By its side a lotus pond has been constructed. On the downward slope, there is a terraced kitchen garden where vegetables for the Centre are also grown. This adds to the greenery in the campus.

There is an artificial waterfall (under construction) on its other side where people can sit on the stairs of this amphitheatre and enjoy viewing the water fountain and the outer decorations of the pagoda. On the circumambulatory path around the pagoda, the statues of the deities of Earth, Water, Sky and Elephants at the end of the main staircase paying respect to the relics of the Buddha are also worth seeing.

Underneath the circumambulatory path and above the food court on the first floor, a visitors' gallery has been constructed, where significant events of the Buddha's life have been depicted in a lively manner through the medium of paintings. This art gallery has been prepared here in consultation with me by artists from Myanmar who worked with a lot of perseverance and reverence under the able guidance and supervision of Mr. Vasudev Kamath, a renowned artist, Facilities have also been provided to viewers in the art gallery to listen to audio descriptions of every painting in five languages at present. These languages are Hindi, Marathi, English, Burmese and Thai.

Equipped with modern audio-video equipment there is also an air-conditioned hall on this floor for providing necessary information on Vipassana and the Buddha to visitors. Just adjacent to it, one more hall is also being constructed. Arrangement of a library has also been made to provide more information related to the Dhamma, where people can sit silently and do their reading.

Visitors can also buy mementoes like books, audio-video CDs & DVDs, replicas of the pagoda, T-shirts etc to treasure the sweet memories of the pagoda.

A guesthouse named '**Dhammalaya**' with board and lodging facilities is also being constructed to the left side of the entrance. This four- storied guesthouse is almost completed. It has 49 double-bed rooms. Meditators from Myanmar and Thailand have made significant contribution in its construction.

Dhamma Pattana Vipassana Centre

When the construction work of the pagoda was commenced, a proposal came that a Vipassana Center should also be established in the pagoda premises for teaching the practical aspects of Vipassana meditation. But it seemed impossible due to shortage of space. In these circumstances, the engineers suggested that in case permission is given to construct a centre in multi-storey building, then construction of a small Vipassana Centre accommodating 100 students might be possible in this limited space also. In view of the demand from the executives of Mumbai as well as considering it to be the gulf area, permission was granted for a meditation centre with 100 air-conditioned rooms and a meditation hall. This Vipassana Centre was given the name - Dhamma Pattana. The Teacher's residence decorated with Burmese paintings (artistic works) was built on the third floor of this building along with the recording - studio, meeting-hall and other necessary lodging facilities. Its external decoration was done after the Burmese architecture so that here also people may feel gratitude towards Myanmar. This place is very suitable for meditation. Surrounded on three sides by sea and gulf one finds here tranquility, beauty and greenery.

The small pagoda built near the Dhamma Pattana has been connected with the Centre for meditation. It has 108 air-conditioned cells. There are separate gates for men and women. Only ten day and long courses are held here. Apart from the staircase, a 'lift' is also available here for students.

In front of the Dhamma Pattana, there is a beautiful garden with green grass and flowers. There are walking paths for men and women. Students enjoy strolling on these paths. On both sides of the road, coconut, date-palm and many other types of fruit bearing trees have been planted to keep the premise clean and beautiful.

Teaching of Pali language in the Pariyatti Building

All the teachings of the Buddha are in Pali language. The Vipassana Research Institute was established to preserve, learn, teach, and to conduct researches in this language. During the courses, students listen to the chanting and quotations, etc in Pali language. However, because they are not acquainted with Pali Language they are naturally not able to understand their meaning. The knowledge of both, the practical aspect of vipassana meditation called Patipatti and its theoretical aspect called Pariyatti is necessary. In order to fulfill this desire of meditators teaching of Pali was started at Dhammagiri, Igatpuri. But now due to many practical difficulties teaching of Pali language and research work are being carried out here at the Pariyatti Bhavan in the premises of Global Pagoda. Both residential and non-residential courses are available for learning Pali language. The Institute has been recognised by the University of Mumbai as a research centre and students can get degrees all the way up to a PhD (doctorate). There is also a library here. Computer facilities are also available here to undertake research work.

Come! Let us resolve to preserve the special features of this magnificent pagoda and its premises for centuries. Let us attain our welfare by practicing this scientific and non- sectarian resultoriented technique of vipassana and derive our own benefit. In this lies the welfare of others.

> Kalyāņmitra, S. N. Goenka

Ceremonies at the Pagoda

Foundation stone laying ceremony on 26 October 1997- The prominent persons(VIPs) present during the ceremony were – Gurudev Shri Satyanarayana Goenka and Mataji Smt. Ilayachi Devi Goenka, Shri Manohar Joshi, Chief Minister of Maharastra; Dr. P.C. Alexander, Governor of Maharastra; Ven. Bhikkhu Dr. Vipulsaraji, Chairman of Mahabodhi Society of India (He provided the body relics of the Buddha on behalf of the Society); Ven. Guang Xin,--a learned monk from Taiwan; Mrs. Damyanti Ratwatte (She as the representative of the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka Sirimao Bandarnaike brought the body relics of the Buddha. This devoted lady strewed all her ornaments in the foundation to make this land a mine of gold and diamonds and the Burmese devotees strewed the invaluable precious stones and ornaments brought in a bag). The ceremony was also attended by the devotees from Myanmar and various other countries.

Inauguration of the first dome and ceremony for the enshrinement of the Buddha-relics on 29 October 2006- The Buddha relics were enshrined at the height of 30.25 M above the dome in a rock receptacle in the presence of Venerable Gurudev Shri Satyanarayana Goenka and Mataji. These relics have been received from the following sources: - (1) from the Mahabodhi Society of India, (2) from the Government of Sri Lanka, and (3) from an Arihant from Myanmar.

Efforts are being made to obtain those relics, which are preserved by the government in the museums for display If these relics are also enshrined in the chambers built in the third dome, then as wished by the Buddha, these will not only remain secure for times to come but also facilitate the devotees to pay their respects and the students will also take benefit of meditating in their presence. No one goes to the museum to show reverence and actually there is no suitable place or atmosphere there for meditation. The museums are thronged only by tourists, who can merely satisfy their curiosity. They do not go there to pay respect. Therefore, the Buddha proclaimed in the *Mahāparinibbāna sutta* before his **Mahāparinibbāna** – "The relics are not for exhibition. These are for veneration and for paying respect. These should be enshrined in some pagoda where all categories of people can go and pay their respects." I firmly believe that the government will certainly understand this fact and the devotees will extend their support to get the relics from the museums to be enshrined here.

Ceremony of Mounting the Parasol - The devotees from Myanmar donated the parasol and themselves mounted it on 07 February 2009 in the presence of Venerable Gurudev Shri Goenkaji and Mataji.

Inauguration Ceremony of the Pagoda - The Pagoda was inaugurated by the President of India, H E Smt. Pratibha Devi Singh Patil on 08 February 2009. The function was attended by many dignitaries.

Design and structure of the pagoda

In some of the countries, the followers of the Buddha give great importance to the pagoda. Such a magnificent and huge pagoda is built after a lapse of many centuries. The four symbols of reverence for the devotees are – Pagoda, the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha.

When the Buddha sits cross-legged, the width and height of the body are nearly the same. The Pagoda also is 94.70 M wide and 94.70 M high. So it is a symbol of the Buddha in meditation. The Buddha's body was of golden colour so the pagoda is coloured gold or decorated with gold foils. An extremely delicate soft crown (parasol) is placed on the head. The octagonal shape below and the elephant trunk like design above of a pagoda represents the eight-fold noble path. The base of the octagonal pagoda symbolizes morality, the bellshaped middle portion represents concentration and the higher part symbolizes wisdom. The seven spherical rings on the bell-shaped part of the pagoda are considered seven stages of the Dhamma, which are necessary for the realization of enlightenment (Nibbana). The ascent from bottom to top and the path to perfect morality, concentration and wisdom is a path full of struggle. The pagoda is a symbol of the Sangha also. Therefore, the followers of the Buddha pay respect to the Pagoda, the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha while going round on the circumambulatory path.

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Children's Meditation Courses in Mumbai Date **Course site** Age (years) Registration 26 & 27-7-2013 28-7 Dombivili 10-16 24 & 25-7-2013 28 - 7Goregaon 10-16 4-8 Dombivili 10-16 2-8 & 3-8-2013 Ulhasnagar 2-8 & 3-8-2013 4-8 10-16 4-8 Matunga 10-16 2-8 & 3-8-2013 11-8 10-16* 9 & 10-08-2013* Sanpada 9 & 10-08-2013* 11-8 10-16* Andeheri 18-8 Ghatkopar 10-16* 16 & 17-8-2013* 10-16 14 & 15-8-2013 18-8 Goregaon 25-8 23 & 24-8-2013 Dombivili 10-16 1-9 Dombivili 10-16 30 & 31-8-2013 30 & 31-8-2013 1-9 Ulhasnagar 10-16 1-9 Matunga 10-16 30 & 31-8-2013 6 & 7-9-2013* 8-9 10-16* Sanpada 8-9 10-16* 6 & 7-9-2013* Andeheri 15-9 Ghatkopar 10-16* 13 & 14-9-2013* 11 & 12-9-2013 15-9 Goregaon 10-16 22-9 20 & 21-9-2013 Dombivili 10-16 27-10 Goregaon 10-16 23 & 24-10-2013 17-11 10-16 13 & 14-11-2013 Goregaon 15-12 Goregaon 10-16 11 & 12-12-2013

Course Timing: 8:30 am to 2:30 pm. Registration Timings: 11 am to 1 pm on the specified numbers and dates for each location.

Course Venues: Ghatkopar: SNDT School, New Building, Cama Lane, Ghatkopar (W), Opp Vidyut Society, Mumbai 400086. Tel: 25011096, 25162505. Goregaon: Vipassana Counselling & Research Centre, Siddharth Municipal General Hospital, Goregaon (W), Tel: 2624-2025 & 98690-23884. Airoli: Saraswati School, Sector 5, Airoli, Mob. 9892565765. Sanpada: Navi Mumbai Mahanagar Palika School, Sector 5, Sanpaada. Tel: 9869405600. Dombivili: K B Vira HighSchool, Near Muncipal Office, Dombivali (E)

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New RESPONSIBILITY Teachers

1. Mr. Shirendev Dorlig, Mongolia

Senior Assistant Teachers

1. Dr. Sharad Badole, Bhilai

NEW APPOINTMENTS Assistant Teachers

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- Hemlata Shashtri, Jalgaon 4. Mr. Herwig Dunzendorfer,
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- Bilimora
- 16. Mr. Amrut Patel, Bilimora 17. Mr Dattatreya More, Dang
- (Gujarat)
 - 29. Mrs Monika Wilson, Australia

DHAMMA DOHAS

Śarana sahī hai ātma kī, anya śarana nā koya; Ātma śarana saddharma śarana, satya vacana sukha hoya. The best refuge is one's own refuge, there is no other refuge. One's own refuge is like the refuge in the Dharma. It is a truth. It brings happiness.

Pūjana arcana vandanā, to hī sārthaka hoya; Jīvana men jāge dharama, pāpa visarjita hoya. Worshipping, paying homage and saluting are meaningful only when one drives out sinful activities and practices Dharma.

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NB *Please bring cushion. *Please register on the specified phone numbers. If unable to attend after registration, please inform in advance. *Please arrive on time for the course. രജ്ഞ

A summary of some of the technical facts regarding the Main Pagoda

8	
Technical detail	Approximate measurement
Total height of the pagoda	94.70 M
Inside height of the dome (without pillar	s) 26.25 M
Internal diameter of the dome	84.85 M
Sitting capacity inside the dome	8,000 – 10,000 persons.
Depth of the foundation of the pagoda	2 -to 7.38 M
Width of the wall of the pagoda	5.25 to 8.75 M
Pagoda-parasol (7.5 MT)	14.9 M high
Crystal adorned at the pinnacle of the pagoda (80 kg) 0.75 M	
Length of the flag attached to parasol	1.7 M
Biggest Eastern Gate of the pagoda	11.4 M wide, 6.4 M high
Other facts	
Height of the smaller pagodas	
in the North and in the South	18.30 M
Bell from Myanmar (18.22 MT)	2.1 M circumference, 2.1 M
	high
Bell from Thailand (Drum)	2.21 M circumference
Statue of the Buddha (87.5 MT)	6.4 M high
Ashoka pillar	16 M high
G880	

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18. Mrs. Rajshreeben More, Dang

19. Mrs. Suryakumari Chintalpudi,

21. Ms. Sangeeta Bageshwar, New

20. Mrs. Rajlaxmi Dube, Simla

23. Mr. Sudhir kumar Nandekar,

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