



WORDS OF DHAMMA

“Daharā ca hi vuddhā ca, ye bālā ye ca paṇḍitā;
aḍḍhā ceva daliddā ca, sabbe maccuparāyaṇā.

—Ja. 461, Dasarathajātaka

Young and old, foolish and wise, rich and poor, all are bound by the ultimate law of death.

May Khanti Pāramī Grow

Pāramī or *pāramitā* (perfection) is that which has ripened, fully matured and reached completion. There are ten good mental qualities, *pāramīs*, the total fulfillment or maturation of which make available to a *bodhisatta* the promise of Buddhahood; and which help all of us to attain final liberation.

Out of the ten perfections, tolerance or forbearance, *khanti pāramī*, is of special importance. To be able to forebear the harshest vicissitudes of existence with tolerance and calm objectivity, to bear an unbearably painful event in life or the loss of one who is near and dear with a calm and quiet mind, indeed to be able to maintain equanimity within at the deepest level at all times – this is to fulfill the demands of the *pāramī* of tolerance.

The *bodhisatta* who fulfilled his *pāramitā* to the highest level and became a *Sammā Sambuddha* (Fully Enlightened One) by the name of Gotama the Buddha, had succeeded in fulfilling this *pāramī* in his previous lives.

Losing a Son

In the course of innumerable lives, the *bodhisatta* at one time was born a brahman in Varanasi. Upon growing up he became the head of the family which consisted of his wife, a daughter, a young son and his wife, and a maidservant. The family was contented and happy. The *bodhisatta* took care of his family by farming with the capable help of his son.

One day he was at his farm ploughing the field, and as usual, his son was collecting the refuse from the ploughing to burn. Suddenly a deadly cobra emerged from the refuse pile and struck the youth. The son fainted as the poison spread. The *bodhisatta* saw his son fall and ran to his side, but by then he was already breathing his last. The *bodhisatta* made a futile attempt to revive his son. Having failed, he then carried his son's dead body and placed it under a tree, and gently laid a cloth over it. Calmly he started ploughing his field again without any pain or distress.

After a while he saw a farmer heading towards the nearby town where he lived. The *bodhisatta* requested him to give a message to his wife, that the maidservant who brought lunch daily for two, today should bring lunch for only one. He also requested him to tell the entire family to come to the fields with flowers, wearing fresh and clean clothes. Upon hearing this the wife understood that the son had possibly died, but she did not burst out crying, nor did any other family member start wailing. Calm and composed they walked to the field.

A *bodhisatta* in each life continues to live the life of Dhamma and work towards ripening one or more *pāramī*. Indeed they not only live the life of Dhamma themselves, but encourage and inspire friends and relatives to live a Dhamma life. In a future life a *bodhisatta* is going to embark on the profound task of bringing countless people onto the path of total liberation as he becomes a Buddha; hence he also ripens in the art of giving Dhamma guidance to others during his innumerable lives as a *bodhisatta*.

He used to guide and encourage family members to lead a wholesome life of pure Dhamma even as they went about their worldly householders' tasks. He also inspired others by his example of living an ideal life of Dhamma. He always guided his family to lead lives of sila and give dana according to their capacity with compassionate and happy minds. He also encouraged them to constantly work towards mental purification by disciplining their minds and developing awareness of arising and falling – the eternal truth of impermanence.

He also encouraged them to strengthen the awareness of impending death from time to time and to understand the immutable law of nature that one who is born must die; that it is inevitable. The *bodhisatta* had ripened well in the awareness of death, and had helped his family members to understand this truth of existence in the same way.

When the four family members came to the field, they saw what they were apprehensive about. But not one of them wept and wailed upon seeing the young man's dead body. Quietly and calmly, they started collecting wood for the cremation. Together they gently laid the dearly beloved's body on the funeral pyre and lovingly decorated it with fragrant flowers. After lighting the pyre they sat around it in quiet contemplation.

A man who was watching this from a distance was very surprised at the family's forbearance. He came close and asked:

‘Are you cremating an animal?’

‘No, it is a dead man whom we are cremating,’ the *bodhisatta* replied.

‘Oh, then perhaps it's your enemy,’ the stranger inquired.

‘No, he was my only son.’

‘Were you not on good terms with your son?’

‘My son was most dear to me,’ said the *bodhisatta* farmer.

‘Then why are you not crying upon losing your most dear son?’ asked the stranger incredulously.

‘He is gone, what has happened is irreversible. Just as a snake abandons its skin and moves on, so also my son has left his body and moved on. What will I gain by crying? He will never come back’.

The stranger asked the same question to the dead youth’s mother. He said, ‘A father’s heart can be as hard as a rock, but you have carried him for nine months, nurtured him with your own milk. A mother’s heart is very soft, so how is it that you too are not crying on losing your only son?’

The stranger asked similar questions to the dead man’s wife. ‘You have indeed lost everything at this young age. Yet you do not cry?’ Then he questioned the sister. ‘A sister often deeply loves her brother. Then how is it that you do not cry on losing your only brother?’ Then to the maidservant he said, ‘Certainly the dead man must have been behaving harshly towards you, and still you are not sad at his passing away’.

The maidservant replied, ‘He was the sweet and soft spoken son of the household, dearly beloved by all. His behaviour towards everyone was very gentle and kind. He was a good man.’

‘Yet no one wept?’ The stranger was truly perplexed.

Seeing his confusion, all the family members echoed the same sentiment that they would gain nothing by weeping and crying. He had come unbidden and left suddenly without informing anyone. Death is a certainty. All beings are born according to their karmas, and they die according to their karmas.

Yathāgato tathā gato, tatha kā paridevanā?
As he came, so he has gone – so what is there to lament?
(Therīgāthā 130)

In this way the *bodhisatta* worked towards increasing his *pāramī* of tolerance or forbearance. He also became a medium for his near and dear ones to increase their own *khanti pāramī*.

Losing a Dear Wife

In another one of the *bodhisatta*’s lives, his wife, a beautiful young woman, fell ill and passed away. Seeing such a lovely woman lying dead, people around felt miserable and sad, but the *bodhisatta* was calm and stable even as he saw his dearly beloved young wife lying dead. Often in such a situation one would find the husband completely distraught and miserable, not eating or drinking or being able to perform his routine daily work, but just wandering around the cremation ground wailing and crying.

But the *bodhisatta* maintained total composure. Upon being asked how he could be so composed he said, ‘That which has to break up will break up sooner or later. Everyone has to die, this is the irrefutable law. My wife too died in accordance with this same law. While she was alive she was my wife and took care of my needs, and I looked after her. Now after dying she is born in some other realm as someone else. Now where is the bond between us? Crying will neither help her nor me.’

Thus the *bodhisatta* nurtured the *khanti pāramī* in this life.

Loss of Elder Brother

In a yet another lifetime the *bodhisatta* was born in a prosperous household. In due course his parents died and the family became dependent on his elder brother who looked after them as well as the family business. Unfortunately a while later he also fell ill and passed away. The *bodhisatta* bore this tragedy with fortitude. He knew that crying would not help anyone including the brother who had passed away, and that it would only make the situation worse. When people

asked him how he could remain so calm and composed in face of such misery he said, ‘Death is the immutable law for all living beings and it is inevitable that with time the body will disintegrate. Crying and weeping is of no use.’ Thus he calmed everyone with words of Dhamma.

Loss of Grandfather

Once the *bodhisatta* was born in a prosperous household. When he was a young man his grandfather passed away. He remained calm and equanimous in those difficult times, but his father became very agitated and could not be calmed. Following the cremation his father built a pavilion where he kept the grandfather’s ashes in an urn. Here he sat all the time weeping. The *bodhisatta* tried calming him but he could not be consoled. Then the *bodhisatta* thought of a plan. He brought in a dead bullock and placed some fresh grass and water in front of it. He then started weeping and pleading with the dead bullock to get up and eat the grass. Seeing this, many people tried to explain to him the futility of what he was doing, but the *bodhisatta* would not give up. People thought he had lost his senses.

On witnessing his son’s ‘madness’ the *bodhisatta*’s father grew anxious. He wondered how a sane and sensible son could turn insane like this. He tried explaining that it was pointless to try to awaken and feed a dead bull, upon which the *bodhisatta* said, ‘Father, just look, the bull’s head, face, legs, indeed the full body is intact. It will certainly awaken with my pleadings. However you are crying for your father to come back when his body has been cremated; only ashes and a few bones remain. Certainly my bull stands a better chance of returning to life!’ This startled the father into recovering his senses. ‘What am I doing!’ he said to himself and stopped crying and wailing. In this way the *bodhisatta* further developed his own *khanti pāramī* as well as helped his father grow in Dhamma.

Loss of Father

Among the innumerable lifetimes in the long chain of lives, the *bodhisatta* was once born as Ram, the son of Dasharatha. At the behest of his father, he left the palace and went into the forest with Sita and Laxman. His father, the king, passed away shortly thereafter and his brother, Bharat, left for the forest to plead with his brother Ram to return to Ayodhya. When the *bodhisatta* Ram heard the news of their father passing away, he did not get disturbed in the least. In fact he broke this news most gently to Sita and Laxman upon their return from an outing to collect fruits and flowers, realizing that they may not be able to bear the pain with fortitude as he himself had done.

As expected, Sita and Laxman were filled with anguish upon hearing the news and started wailing and weeping, as Bharat and the Ayodhya citizens who had accompanied him to the forest were also doing. Then *bodhisatta* Ram, well endowed with *khanti pāramī*, spoke words of wisdom most compassionately. ‘We will not be able to bring him back even if we cry our eyes out, as crying never helps. The one who is crying and making others cry only creates harm for himself and others. Also crying does not help the one who is dead and gone. Hence at such times it is wise to eradicate the pain as soon as it arises, just as a person extinguishes a fire as soon as it starts burning his house.’

Upon hearing these wise words the people stopped crying. In this way the *bodhisatta* continued to ripen his *khanti pāramī* even as he encouraged others to do the same.

(Taken from the *Jātaka Tales*)

Dear meditators! In life one always comes across unwanted occurrences. One also encounters the loss of dear ones or of treasured possessions. May we all grow in tolerance, khanti pāramī, and learn from the *bodhisatta*'s invaluable experiences that give us incomparable lessons on how to deepen our forbearance and other perfections.

Kalyanmitta,
S. N. Goenka

(Taken from Hindi Newsletter "Vipashyana" Vol. 24, No. 8,
dated: 15-2-1995)



Question and Answer with Goenkaji

Q: You tell us to neither indulge in craving nor in aversion. Then how do we live our lives?

Gji: Try it! Life will only get better and not result in inaction. Dharma does not turn us into vegetables, that anyone can come and cut us and we sit passively saying that we are non-violent. If a person is indulging in wrong action towards us then we will speak to him with compassion. If he persists we will speak firmly or even take firm action against him, but there will be no anger within us; only compassion for him. If we get angry with him then we are not on the right path. We will certainly stop him with loving kindness or even with firmness, but without anger. This is not just for our own benefit but for his own welfare as well, because if he persists in negative behaviour he will only generate unhappiness for himself and for others. Vipassana teaches us to live rightly.

Q: What is the difference between Vipassana meditation and hypnotism? Are they relevant in these times?

Gji: Vipassana and hypnotism are poles apart. Vipassana awakens us from delusion and takes us into reality. Hypnotism takes us into a world of imagination. Hypnotism leads us into a certain state of being via imagination, whereas Vipassana brings us out of imagined reality and shows us the truth. Vipassana teaches us to see reality as it is and to know its true nature, that is, its impermanent nature. Thus by seeing its ephemeral nature, one learns to see there is nothing to hold on to. One then starts coming out of his or her attachments and aversions. In hypnotism, this profound work cannot be done.

Q: The body and soul I presume are considered separate in Vipassana. Can they remain that way always?

Gji: Let us forget for a minute whatever the philosophical belief is behind this statement and focus on two truths that lie before us. There are impermanent and permanent realities. The realm of the permanent is eternal, absolute, and one may call it soul, god, state of nibbana or moksha. Whatever name one knows it by, it is the eternal state where nothing ever changes; it is as it is forever. Everything else is in the impermanent realm where everything is in a state of flux, always changing, constant creation and destruction. The difference between the two is not to be understood by the intellect, but is to be directly experienced.

All along one has been increasing the stock of craving and aversion; now with practice one will start purifying the mind, reducing the stock of defilements till one finally moves beyond the realm of the impermanent. Only then will one experience that which is absolute and permanent, never changing. As this state cannot be put in words, if it is ever described in words it will be misleading. It must be

experienced and Vipassana can give that experience. Of course it takes time to reach that state since one does not know how big the stock of defilements which one has accumulated is, and how long it will take to clear that stock. But the journey from impermanent to permanent has to begin now.

Q: Please tell us what kind of changes we can expect through Vipassana practice?

Gji: To experience this is precisely the reason why we are asking for 10 days of your time. How else can we teach you what we are trying to explain! You have to give something in order to gain something. These discourses will not tell you much, you need to experience what we are saying for yourself. Let this talk be an inspiration for you to try it and see if it really helps in purifying the defilements or not. This experience is very pleasing and you will find that your life starts changing for the better.

Q: Can't you teach instant Vipassana like instant food?

Gji: Ok, from now on believe: 'I am a vipassana meditator'. Just believe it. But will that help? To understand oneself by the means of practicing Vipassana meditation truly takes time. It is never learned in an instant. In fact it's better for you if your menu should have an instant decision to do Vipassana!



Children's Meditation Courses in Mumbai

Date:

Place:

20-12, 2016 ● 24-1, 21-2, 20-3, 17-4, 15-5, 19-6, Goregaon
(Age 10 to 16 Only) Registration before Course Thursday and Friday

Date	Course site	Age (years)	Registration
First Sunday	Dombivili	10-16	2 days before Course
First Sunday	Ulhasnagar	10-16	2 days before Course
Second Sunday	Sanpada	10-16	2 days before Course
Second Sunday	Andheri	10-16	2 days before Course
Third Sunday	Ghatkopar	10-16	2 days before Course
Fourth Sunday	Airoli	10-16	2 days before Course

"Please call or send a text sms message with the name & age of the child two days in advance for registration"

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

Course Venues: **Goregaon:** Vipassana Counselling and Research Centre, Siddharth Municipal General Hospital, Goregaon (W), Mob. 98924-15803, Tel: 2624-2025. **Dombivili:** K B Vira HighSchool, Near Municipal Office, Dombivili (E) Mob. 9930301594. **Ulhasnagar:** A Block 703/1405, Gokul Nagar, Behind Netaji School, Near Mahesh Granite, Tel. 9970755130, **Sanpada:** Navi Mumbai Mahanagar Palika School, Sector 5, Sanpada. Tel: 7738649821, 9699862322, 9223300575, **Andheri:** Mayfair Meridian Meditation Hall, Ceasar Road, Off S.V. Road, Amboli, Near St. Blaise **Ghatkopar:** SNTD School, New Building, Cama Lane, Ghatkopar (W), Opp Vidyut Society, Mumbai 400086. Tel: 25011096, 25162505. **Airoli:** Saraswati School, Sector 5, Airoli, Mob. 9892565765. Church Andheri, Mob. 99674-80865, 99306-78532.

Please call two days in advance for registration.

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.

VRI - Training Programmes at Global Pagoda premises, Mumbai in 2016

- Workshop for writing Pali in Roman, Devnagari & Sinhalese. Dt: 20 – 27 Apr.
- Six week intensive residential course for Pali - Hindi training. Dt: 4th May – 15th June.
- 12 week intensive residential course for Pali - English training. Dt.: 6th July – 5th Oct.
- Workshop for Pali – English Translation. Dt.: 7th Oct – 12th Oct.
- For forms & info. reg. eligibility please visit –
- <http://www.vridhamma.org/Theory – And-Practice-Courses/>
- Or Contact: VRI Off – 022 33747560. Ms. Baljit Lamba –

NEW APPOINTMENTS ASSISTANT TEACHERS

1. Mrs. Sundari Ganeshan Narayan, Bangalore
2. Mrs. Reena Hooda, Rohtak

Childrens' Course Teachers

1. Mr. Frederico Capo, UK
2. Miss Pailin Wigromlert, Thailand
3. Miss Pimchaya Tipayathammarat, Thailand
4. Miss Puangpetch Thaisong, Thailand

5. Mrs. Saumya Wijesekera, Sri Lanka
6. Mrs. ULD Vimala Liyanage, Sri Lanka
7. Mrs. Indrakanthi Perera, Sri Lanka
8. Ms. Nandini Weerasuriya, Sri Lanka
9. Mrs. Sharika Neydorf, Sri Lanka
10. Mrs. Anula Fonseka, Sri Lanka
11. Ms. V. Ruvini Jayashanthi Tilakarathne, Sri Lanka

09833518979. Ms. Rajshri – 09004698648. Ms. Alka Vengulerkar: 9820583440

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Two Day Residential Course for Children

Age: 12 – 16 yrs. Dt: 26 – 27 Dec – For Boys.// 28 – 29 Dec. – for Girls Venue: Naik Foundation, Padgha, Bhivandi, near Pallavi Hotel & Padgha Toll Naka, 15 mins. from Khadavli Railway Station on Mumbai N.H. No. 3. Contact: From 15th Dec onwards – 25162505 // 25011096.

Please Note

Those who do not receive the newsletter for any reason may request it in English, Hindi or Marathi by E-mail. vri_admin@dhamma.net.in

One-day Mega course schedule at Global Vipassana Pagoda for 2016

Sunday – 17th Jan. in Gratitude of Sayagi U Ba Khin (19th), **Sunday 22nd May**, Buddha Purnima (21st May); **Sunday 17th July**, Guru-Purnima (19th); **Sunday 2nd Oct.** in Gratitude of Respected S.N. Goenka (29th Sept.) & Sharad Purnima.

One-day mega courses will be held at GVP in presence of Respected Mataji. Time: 11 am to 4 pm. Non meditators may participate in the 3 pm discourse. Please come only with prior registration. **Samaggana Taposukho**: Avail of the immense benefit of meditating in large group. For registration Contact: 022 28451170 // 022 337475-01 / 43 / 44 – Extn.: 9. (Tel booking: 11 am to 5 pm daily). **Online registration: www.oneday.globalpagoda.org.**

DHAMMA DOHAS

*Anapaḍḍha yā vidvāna hoṃ, nirdhana yā dhanavāna,
Sabhī kāla ke grāsa haiṃ, saba ke sīmita prāṇa.*

Whether illiterate or educated, whether rich or poor,
All get consumed by death, all have but a limited lifetime.

*Jāti varṇa kā gotra kā, pakṣapāta nā koy,
Jo jo janame jagata meṃ, maraṇa sabhī kā hoy.*

There is no discrimination between people of different castes, colours or clans, For all who take birth in this world, death is inevitable.

*Koī sāre viśva kā, bhale vijetā hoy,
Mṛtyurāja ke vāra se, nā aparājita koy.*

Even if one is victorious over the entire world, He is unable to gain victory when attacked by death itself.

*Jala meṃ, thala meṃ, gagana meṃ, nahīṃ surakṣita koy,
Aisā sthāna na jagata meṃ, jahāṇ maraṇa nā hoy.*

One is not safe from death anywhere, be it in water, earth or the sky, There is not a place in the universe where death is not.

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