

Vipassana Newsletter

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

Vol. 17, No. 10: 26 September 2007

Annual Subscription: Rs 30; Life Subscription: Rs. 500

Published every month by Vipassana Research Institute

Web version: www.vri.dhamma.org/newsletters

WORDS OF DHAMMA

*Phandanam capalam cittam,
durakkham dunnivārayam;
ujum karoti medhāvī,
usukārova tejanam.*

The fickle, unstable mind,
difficult to guard, difficult to restrain;
the wise one straightens it,
as a fletcher straightens an arrow shaft.

—*Dhammapada 33*

Sāmisa and Nirāmisa in Meditation

Vipassana Research Institute

Sāmisa in Pali means raw meat or flesh, or delicious food. Metaphorically, however, it connotes a defiled state of mind, which will lead to rebirth in this world or another. It refers to a mind which reacts to body sensations (*vedanā*), thereby creating *rāga* (lust or passion for pleasurable sensations), *dosa* (aversion for unpleasant ones) and *moha* (ignorance about the neutral ones).

In contrast to this, the type of mind which remains dispassionate, unattached to body sensations, understanding them as *anicca* (impermanent), *dukkha* (suffering) and *anatta* (substanceless), is called *nirāmisa*.

The mental activity of an ordinary person always remains *sāmisa* (defiled, impure), whereas a meditator develops the ability to keep his mind *nirāmisa* (pure, undefiled). He does so by making every effort to truly comprehend the *anicca* (transitory) nature of *vedanās* (sensations).

Sāmisa and *nirāmisa* are often used metaphorically by the Buddha, as opposites and in association with various other terms. Presented here are examples of his figurative explanations of meditation practice. We are not concerned here with the popular modern meaning as vegetarian (*nirāmisa*) and non-vegetarian (*sāmisa*), as they have sometimes been interpreted.

In the *Mahāsatiṭṭhāna Sutta*, in the section on *Vedanānupassanā*, the terms *sāmisa* and *nirāmisa* occur in reference to the three types of *vedanā*—

sukha (pleasant), *dukkha* (unpleasant) and *adukkhamasukha* (neutral)—which a meditator is instructed to comprehend thoroughly as *anicca* (impermanent).

Again, in the *Aṅguttara Nikāya*,¹ it is said that *sukhā vedanā* (pleasant sensation) may be *sāmisa* (defiled) or *nirāmisa* (undefiled). It emphasizes that the latter is superior to the former.

Elsewhere, the term *sāmisa* (sometimes written *āmisa*) is used as an opposite to Dhamma. For example, *dhammadāna* (the gift of Dhamma) is said to be superior to *āmisadāna* (ordinary gifts). In the same way, *dhammayoga* (joined with Dhamma), *dhammacāga* (Dhamma generosity) and *dhammabhoga* (Dhamma wealth) are designated as superior to the respective terms associated with *āmisa*.²

In the *Patisambhidāmagga*,³ the terms *āmisa* and *nirāmisa* are connected with a number of words—*uppāda* (arising), *pavatta* (conduct), *nimitta* (image), *āyuhana* (relinquishing life), *paṭisandhi* (conception), *gati* (going), *nibbatti* (rebirth), *upapatti* (rebirth), *jāti* (birth), *jarā* (aging), *byādhi* (illness), *maraṇam* (death), *soka* (sorrow), *parideva* (lamentation) and *upāyāsa* (despair). All these terms should be understood in their context, but in each case *nirāmisa* is opposed to and superior to *āmisa*.

When any *vedanā* (sensation) arises because of contact at any of the six sense doors, an ordinary person will naturally start reacting to it. *Sukhā*

vedanā (pleasant sensation) elicits lust, *dukkhā vedanā* (unpleasant sensation) elicits aversion and *adukkhamasukhā vedanā* (neutral sensation) elicits the reaction of ignorance. Being ignorant of the impermanent nature of the sensation, one remains attached and continues to flow in the stream of rebirth. As a result, all the *kāmasukhas* (worldly objects) are characterised as *sāmisa*, just as all the *vedanās* which lead to *bhavacakka* (the cycle of birth and death) are *sāmisa* (defiled).⁴

In the *Nirāmisā Sutta* of the *Samyutta Nikāya*,⁵ *sāmisa* and *nirāmisā* are connected with the terms *pīti* (joy), *sukha* (delight), *upekkhā* (equanimity) and *vimokkha* (deliverance) as they are experienced in different stages of *jhāna* (absorptions). It says that an ordinary person can only experience the qualities of *pīti*, *sukha* and *upekkhā* through the five sense doors (*kāmaguṇa*). As such, they are always *sāmisa* (defiled), leading to misery in this world, and certainly not to liberation.

In contrast, whatever *pīti* (joy), *sukha* (delight) and *upekkhā* (equanimity) a meditator encounters as he advances through the first four *jhānas* is *nirāmisā* (undefiled) because it is increasingly detached from sense pleasures and mental pain or pleasure. They are characterised as *nirāmisā pīti*, *nirāmisā sukha* and *nirāmisā upekkhā* and are said to be far superior to that experienced by an ordinary person.⁶

By practising *jhāna*, a meditator escapes the *kāmaloka* (sensual world) by attainment of the first four *jhānas*, but he is still attached to the *rūpa-loka* (world of form). The *vimokkha* (deliverance) of the first four *jhānas* is described as *sāmisa-vimokkha* in comparison to the deliverance which a meditator attains by transcending each level from the fifth to the eighth *jhāna* respectively. As these stages of *samādhi* (concentration) are more subtle and superior to the previous four *jhānas*, the associated *vimokkha* (deliverance) is described as *nirāmisā-vimokkha* by comparison.

At the stage of the eighth *jhāna*, however, the meditator is still attached to the *arūpaloka* (formless worlds) and so his *vimokkha* (deliverance) is still partial in comparison to the final stage of *nibbāna*. The Buddha says that the *pīti* (joy), *sukha* (delight), *upekkhā* (equanimity) or *vimokkha* (deliverance) that a liberated person experiences cannot be compared with that

experienced in any of the *jhānas*. It is a stage of purity beyond all others, hence it is described as *nirāmisatara*, purest of the pure, the stage par excellence, where all the *āsavā* (cankers) are destroyed, the heart is free from lust, hatred and illusion and the meditator is firmly established in *vimutti* (liberation)—

*Yaṃ kho, bhikkhave, khīṇāsavassa bhikkhuno rāgā cittaṃ vimuttaṃ paccavekkhato... uppajjati pīti... sukhaṃ... upekkhā... vimokkho... Ayam vuccati nirāmisā nirāmisataro vimokkho.*⁷

Of the meditator who has attained this prime state of mind in meditation, the Buddha says—

*Santakāyo santavāco, santavā susamāhito; Vantalokāmisō bhikkhu, upasanto'ti vuccati.*⁸

Calm in body, calm in speech, calm in mind,
well composed, the bhikkhu,
who has renounced all worldly desires,
is called 'truly tranquil'. ☸

Notes:

1. *Anguttara Nikāya* 1.2.65-77, *Sukhavagga*
2. Ibid. 2.8.37, *Dānavagga*
3. *Paṭisambhidamagga* 1.213
4. Ibid. 2.4.279
5. Op. cit. 2.4.279
6. Also cf, *Mahāsatipatthāna Sutta*, op. cit. *Pañcattaya Sutta*; *Majjhima Nikāya*, *Ānāpāna Sutta* 3.21
7. *Samyutta Nikāya* 2.4.279
8. *Dhammapada* 378

FIRST 10-DAY COURSE AT GLOBAL PAGODA

The first ten-day Vipassana course at *Dhamma Pattana*, the new Vipassana centre at the Global Pagoda, will start on 25 October 2007 and will conclude on the morning of 4 November. This course is only for serious old students. Only those with valid admission letters will be admitted to the course.

For registration, contact: Mr. Ram Pratap Yadav,
C/o Goenka House, *Shubhada*, Hatkesh Society, Plot 76,
Ninth N. S. Circular Road, JVPD Scheme, Vile Parle
(W), Mumbai 400 049. Mobile: 093268-93651.
Tel: (022) 2610 5403, 2616 2837;
Email: yadavdg@gmail.com

Meditators wishing to share in the merits of the construction of *Dhamma Pattana* may contact:
The Treasurer, Global Vipassana Foundation,
C/o Khimji Kunverji & Co., 52 Bombay Mutual Building,
Sir P. M. Road, Mumbai 400 001, India.
Tel: [91] (22) 2266-2550; Fax: 2266-4045;
Email: kamlesh@khimjikunverji.com
Website: www.globalpagoda.org (online donation facility)

Cheques or bank drafts should be payable at Mumbai and drawn in favour of Global Vipassana Foundation, A/c No. 11244, Bank of India, Stock Exchange Branch, Mumbai.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Question: What is the relevance of Dhamma to a person on the street whose stomach is empty?

Goenkaji: Dhamma is helpful to everyone, rich or poor. A large number of people living in poverty come to Vipassana courses and find it very helpful. Their stomachs are empty but their minds also are so agitated. With Vipassana, they learn how to be calm and equanimous. Then they can face their problems and their lives improve. They also come out of addiction to alcohol, gambling and drugs.

Question: You spoke about non-attachment to things. What about non-attachment to persons?

Goenkaji: Yes, there should be non-attachment to persons also. You may have true love, compassionate love for someone. But when you have attachment, then you don't have love because you expect something, material or emotional, from this person. When you have attachment, you are expecting something in return. When you truly start loving this person, then you only give; it is one-way traffic. You don't expect anything in return. Then the attachment goes, the tension goes. You are so happy.

Question: Why is drinking only one glass of wine a breakage of *sīla*?

Goenkaji: One glass can lead to more glasses. So why not come out of it from the very beginning? Once one becomes addicted to anything, it is so difficult to break the addiction. Why not refrain from anything that is addictive?

Question: What do we do when someone else is doing wrong to us?

Goenkaji: You must not allow people to do wrong to you. Whenever someone does something wrong, he harms others and at the same time he harms himself. If you allow him to do wrong, you are encouraging him to do wrong. You must use all your strength to stop him, but with good will, compassion, and sympathy for that person. If you act with hatred or anger, you only aggravate the situation. But you cannot have good will for such a person unless your mind is calm and peaceful. So practice to develop peace within yourself, and then you can solve the problem.

ONE-DAY COURSE AT GLOBAL PAGODA

One-day courses are being organized every Sunday from 11 am to 5 pm at the Global Pagoda. Henceforth, the one-day course on the **third** Sunday of every month will be conducted in the main meditation hall under the main dome of the Global Pagoda. Goenkaji will be present during these courses. Registration for the course is compulsory. (There are no facilities for overnight stay at the Global Pagoda.)

For registration, contact Mr. Derek Pegado, Tel: (022) 2845-1206; 2845-1204, 2845-2261. Website: www.globalpagoda.org; Email: globalpagoda@hotmail.com

Meditators wishing to serve these courses may contact Mr. Derek Pegado.

FIRST COURSE AT DHAMMA NĀGAJJUNA

Fifty-eight students participated in the first ten-day course for old students in August 2007. The course was conducted in one of the two partially completed mini halls. The hall could not be completed in time because of inclement weather and prevailing conditions.

Construction is in full swing and the second course for male students is in progress. There will be a course every month alternately for males and females.

Contact: *Dhamma Nāgajjuna*, VIMC, Hill Colony, Nagarjun Sagar Dist. Nalgoda 508202, (140.4 km Hyderabad Road, Near Buddha Project, 3 km from Hill Colony towards Hyderabad) Mobile: 094401-39329. Email: info@nagajjuna.dhamma.org

NEW VIPASSANA CENTRE IN BHUSAVAL

The Bhusaval Vipassana centre is situated about 1 km from the Tapi river on a piece of land of about 18,000 square feet (1662 square metres). The land has been allotted by the Bhusaval Municipality. It has a meditation hall that can seat about 100 meditators. At present, the centre hosts one-day course every third Sunday of the month (11 am to 5 pm), children's course every fourth Sunday (9 am to 3 pm) and group meditation every Sunday (7.30 to 8.30 am). In addition, any meditator can meditate in the Dhamma hall between 5 am to 9 pm daily. Goenkaji has named it *Dhamma Bhūsana* (Ornament of Dhamma). Nearly a hundred trees have been planted and landscaping work is in progress.

For more details, please contact:

Dhamma Bhūsana, Shantinagar, Omakar Colony, Near Kotecha High School, Bhusaval 425 201.

Email: info@bhusana.dhamma.org.

Contact: Mrs. Padma Kotecha, 98229-14056

Goenkaji's Discourses on Television

Aastha: Daily, 9:40 to 10 am. **Hungama and Bindass:** Daily, 4.30 to 6.00 am. **Zee: Urja,** daily, 4:30 am. **USA: Aastha TV** at 6 pm EST (Mon to Fri) on WORLDDIRECT platform of DIRECTV on channel no. 2005. (Please confirm exact telecast timings.)

Admission to Pali Courses at VRI, Igatpuri

One-Month Crash Course in Pali-Hindi – Basic:

4 Dec. 2007 to 1 Jan. 2008.

Last date for application: 15 Oct. 2007.

One-Month Crash Course in Pali-Hindi – Advanced:

2 Jan 2008 to 30 January 2008.

Last date for application is 15 Oct 2007.

Contact: VRI, *Dhamma Giri*, Igatpuri 422 403.

Tel: (02553) 244076, 244086. Email: admin@vri.dhamma.org

Manager Required at Dhamma Paphulla

Vipassana Meditation and Research Centre, No. 185, 1st floor, 4th Cross, Lalbagh Road, Bangalore 560 027. Tel: (080) 2222-4330, Email: info@paphulla.dhamma.org Long term servers also required. Vipassana meditators, aged 30 to 50 years may apply. Suitable honorarium will be given if required.

Assistant Manager Required at Dhamma Sindhu

Kutch Vipassana Centre, Bada, Mandvi-Kutch 370 475.

Tel: Bhuj (02832) 255218, 251754, •Gandhidham: (02836) 223654, 220141, Mandvi: (02834) 224198; Email: info@sindhu.dhamma.org. Vipassana meditators, aged 30 to 50 years may apply. Suitable honorarium will be given if required.

CHILDREN'S COURSES IN MUMBAI

To serve children's courses in Mumbai, call 98200-22990.

Date	Venue	Age	Registration
7 Oct.	South Mumbai	10-12 yrs	4 & 5 Oct.
14 Oct.	Ulhasnagar	13-16 yrs	12 & 13 Oct.
21 Oct.	Ghatkopar	10-12 yrs	18 & 19 Oct.
4 Nov.	South Mumbai	13-16 yrs	2 & 3 Nov.
11 Nov.	Ulhasnagar	10-12 yrs	8 & 9 Nov.
18 Nov.	Ghatkopar	13-16 yrs	15 & 16 Nov.
2 Dec.	South Mumbai	10-12 yrs	29 & 30 Nov.
2 Dec.	Matunga	13-16 yrs	29 & 30 Nov.
9 Dec.	Andheri	10-12 yrs	6 & 7 Dec.
9 Dec.	Ulhasnagar	13-16 yrs	6 & 7 Dec.
16 Dec.	Ghatkopar	10-12 yrs	13 & 14 Dec.

Course Timing: 8:30 am to 2:30 pm. **Registration:** 11 am to 1 pm.

Course Venues: **Andheri (W):** Dada Saheb Gaikwad Sansthan, Babasaheb Ambedkar Marg, RTO Corner, Four Bungalows. Tel: 2510-1096, 2516-2505. **Ghatkopar (W):** SNTD School, New Building, Cama Lane, Opp Vidyut Society. Tel: 2510-1096, 2516-2505. **Matunga:** Amulakh Amirchand High School, Rafi Ahmed Kidwai Road, New SNTD College, King's Circle, Matunga (CR), Tel: 2510-1096, 2516-2505. **South Mumbai:** Tel: 2308-1622. **Ulhasnagar:** Guru Nanak High School, Kurla Camp, Ulhasnagar-4. Tel: (0251) 252-2693.

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

Three-Day Residential Children's Courses:

For girls (12 to 16 years): 11 to 13 Nov. 2007

For boys (12 to 16 years): 14 to 16 Nov. 2007

Contact: *Dhamma Savitā*, Khadavli Vipassana centre, Matoshri Vriddhashram, Sorgan, Padgha, Tal. Bhivandi, Dist. Thane 421101
Tel: 2510-1096, 2516-2505.

CHILDREN'S COURSES IN PUNE

Two-Day Residential Children's Course

For boys (8 to 16 years): 4 to 5 Nov. 2007

For girls (8 to 16 years): 6 to 7 Nov. 2007

Children's course: (one-day): Every fourth Sunday.

(Teenagers' course:) For girls, 12 to 20 Nov. For boys, 20 to 28 Nov.)

Contact: Pune Vipassana Samiti, Opposite Nehru Stadium, Near Anand Mangal Karyalaya, Dadawadi, Pune 411002. Tel: (020) 2446-8903, 2446-4243; Email: webmaster@punna.dhamma.org

NEW RESPONSIBILITIES:

Ācaryas:

U Thein Aung, *Myanmar*

To serve courses for bhikkhus in Myanmar

Senior Assistant Teachers:

1. Mr. Shirendev Dorlig, *Mongolia* 2. Ms. Angela Davis, *U.K.*

NEW APPOINTMENTS

Assistant Teachers:

Mr. Ram Swarup Bharati, *Guna, M.P.*

Children's Course Teachers

1. Mrs. C. Madhavi K. Reddy, *Hyderabad*

2. Mrs. Su-Ling Lin, *Taiwan*

DHAMMA DOHAS

Sānsa dekhate dekhate, mana avicala ho jāya;

Avicala mana niramala bane, sabaja mukta ho jāya.

Observing breath after breath, the mind becomes still;
Unwavering, the mind becomes pure
and naturally finds liberation.

Pala pala kṣana kṣana hoṣa rakha, apanā karma sudhāra;

Sukha se jīne kī kalā, apanī ora nihāra.

Moment by moment maintain your awareness,
rectify your own actions;

This is the art of living happily by observing yourself.

With much metta,

A Vipassana meditator

Kṣana kṣana pratikṣana sajava raha, apanā hoṣa sambhāla;

Rāga dveṣa kī pratikriyā, tāla sake to tāla.

Moment by moment remain alert, guard your sanity;
Strive to avoid the reactions of craving and aversion.

Sānsa dekhate dekhate, satya prakāṭatā jāya;

Satya dekhate dekhate, parama satya dikha jāya.

As you observe breath after breath the truth reveals itself;
Observing truth after truth, you come to ultimate truth.

With best compliments from

MOTILAL BANARSIDASS

41 U.A. Bungalow Road, Jawahar Nagar, Delhi 110 007

Mumbai, Tel: 23513526; Chennai, Tel: 24982315;

Pune, Tel: 24486190; Bangalore, Tel: 26542591;

Kolkata, Tel: 22824872, Patna, Tel: 2671442; Varanasi, Tel: 2412331.

SUBSCRIPTION TO ENGLISH/HINDI MONTHLY NEWSLETTER: ANNUAL: RS 30 (U.S. \$10 OUTSIDE INDIA);
LIFE SUBSCRIPTION: RS 500 (U.S. \$100 OUTSIDE INDIA) BY BANK DRAFT, PAYABLE AT IGATPURI IN FAVOUR OF VRI

Edited and published by R. P. Yadav for VRI, Igatpuri 422 403 and printed at Akshar Chitra Press, 69B-Road, Satpur, Nashik 422 007

26 September 2007

Posted at Igatpuri, Dist. Nashik

Posting Day: *Purnima* of every month

LICENSED TO POST WITHOUT PREPAYMENT OF POSTAGE - LICENCE NUMBER – L II/RNP/WPP-13

POSTAL REG. NO. L II/REN./RNP-39/2006-2008

PRINTED MATTER

If undelivered, please return to:

Vipassana Research Institute

Dhamma Giri, Igatpuri-422 403,

Dist. Nashik, Maharashtra, India.

Tel: [91] (02553) 244076, 244086; Fax: 244176

Email: info@giri.dhamma.org

Website: www.vri.dhamma.org