

Vipassana Newsletter

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

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Dhamma Giri, Igatpuri-422 403, Maharashtra

WORDS OF DHAMMA

<i>Mitte bhajassu kalyāṇe,</i>	Let one associate with noble friends,
<i>suddhājīve atandite;</i>	Energetic and of pure livelihood;
<i>paṭisanthāravutyassa,</i>	Let one be cordial in his ways
<i>ācāraḥkusalā siyā;</i>	And refined in conduct;
<i>tato pāmojjabahulo,</i>	Filled, thereby, with joy,
<i>dukkhassantaṃ karissati.</i>	He will make an end of suffering.

—Dhammapada 376

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF DHAMMA SERVICE

S. N. Goenka

Dhamma service is a very important part of the practice of Dhamma. When you come to a course of ten days and practise Vipassana, you are purifying your mind. You are strengthening your mind, so that you can apply the practice in your daily life. If you can't apply Dhamma in your daily life, then just coming to a course becomes another rite, ritual or religious ceremony.

Having learned Vipassana at a centre, you go out in the world where things are so unpleasant, and everything goes totally against your wishes or your dreams. You are shaken and can't face this. It is so difficult. So one gets a very good opportunity to give Dhamma service in a ten-day course. The atmosphere in the Dhamma centre is so congenial to learn how to apply Dhamma in your daily life.

When you serve for ten days, you apply what you have learned in your ten-day course. You deal with the same things that you have to do outside: to deal with people—with the students, with the teacher, with the other Dhamma servers, with the trustees. What is your behaviour in such situations? You make mistakes, and you learn from them. Again you make a mistake, and again you rectify it. This is how you learn. This is the practical aspect of applying Dhamma in life.

Another important thing is that while you are giving service to Dhamma, Dhamma service, this is apart of *dāna*—*dhammadāna*. *Sabbadānaṃ dhammadānaṃ jināti*—The *dāna* of Dhamma excels all other *dāna*. You are giving the *dāna* of Dhamma. The teacher is teaching, this is good. Somebody has given a

donation, this also is good. But then there must be people to serve at that time. So you are a part of this, you are serving. This is your donation.

The donation of your service, I would say, is much more valuable than the donation of your money. It is the intention which is most important. The Buddha said, *Cetanā ahaṃ, bhikkhave, kammaṃ vadāmi*—Volition, O monks, I call *kamma*. When you give *dāna*, your intention is, “With my money, so many people will benefit. I can give money to quench the thirst of someone, or give food or medicine to someone. These are very good deeds. But here I see, when I give money, so many people come out of their misery, their impurities. My money is used in a very wholesome way.” So this kind of volition in the mind goes to the credit of your *kamma*.

But when you are here for ten days, every moment you are giving service, and you are giving service with the volition, “May more and more people benefit.” This volition continues for ten days, so the proportion of time you spend in generating this volition is much greater than when you gave the *dāna* of money. I am not saying, “Don't give *dāna* of money.” Otherwise how will courses run? But between the two, the donation of service, Dhamma service, is much more beneficial.

I have found something else from my own experience, and from the experience of many students also: For a number of years I was a Dhamma server assisting my teacher; I would just translate his words. On his instruction, I would go to the students and

Remain Equanimous

discuss their problem—such kinds of jobs. I found that this was so helpful to me. After sitting a course of ten days, and then giving service to the students for ten days, my meditation became very strong. And I have heard this as well from many students. They keep saying, “I have given service for ten days at a Vipassana course, and my meditation has become very strong, my Dhamma has become very strong.” This is natural, it happens like this.

I would say that every student should make it a point to spare some time for serving people in Dhamma. To take course after course while doing nothing for Dhamma service is not a healthy way of developing in Dhamma. Take courses, but also spare some time for serving Dhamma. This is very important.

Bhavatu sabba maṅgalam—May all beings be happy! ☸
(Excerpted from Question & Answer session, Annual Meeting, Dhamma Thalī, Jaipur, on January 3, 1993 and published by VRI in *For the Benefit of Many*.)

SAYINGS OF SAYAGYI U BA KHIN

☸ The Dhamma can stand the test of those who are anxious to do so. They can know for themselves what the benefits are.

☸ Dhamma eradicates suffering and gives happiness. Who gives this happiness? It is not the Buddha but the Dhamma, the knowledge of *anicca* within the body, which gives this happiness. That is why you must meditate and be aware of *anicca* continually.

☸ The more one is attached to self, the greater is the suffering.

☸ Only those who take to meditation with good intentions can be assured of success. With the development of the purity and the power of the mind backed by the insight into the ultimate truth of nature, one may be able to do a lot of things in the right direction for the benefit of mankind.

☸ *Anicca* is inside of everybody. It is within reach of everybody. Just a look into oneself and there it is. ...for householders, *anicca* is the gem of life which they will treasure to create a reservoir of calm and balanced energy for their own well-being and for the welfare of society.

☸ *Anicca* when properly developed will solve almost all your problems. It might not even be necessary for you to ask questions for answers. As the appreciation of *anicca* grows, so will the veil of ignorance fade away. When the way becomes clear for right understanding, doubts and fears will disappear automatically. You will then see things in the true perspective.

At the age of forty-two, while living the life of a good householder, there arose in me a tremendous urge to pursue the path of purification of mind. This was stirred up in me as a result of a saintly person saying to me, “There can be no progress in the spiritual life without purification of the mind.” Upon hearing these words, I immediately began to search for a method by which the mind could be purified.

Two friends of mine told me about Vipassana meditation as taught by Goenkaji, but at that time I was not inclined to go and try. But when another friend attended the course and within a month expressed his desire to take a second course, I thought there must be something worthwhile in it. This was primarily because this man was a businessman to whom time and money were important, yet he was prepared to sacrifice both for the sake of Vipassana.

I attended my first course in July 1972 at Nashik and immediately stayed on for the following short course. In this first course, even though one gets only a glimpse of the technique, I felt that such a unique experience was just what I had been searching for. For the first time in my life I was a real meditator: really introverted, observing myself.

Despite this positive feeling, I did not want to blindly accept this technique without experimenting and putting it to the test. So I decided to practise for three months at home and then practise intensively for another three months doing courses with Goenkaji in different camps throughout India. At the end of this period I was firmly convinced that here was a wonderful technique for purification of the mind, purification which can eradicate defilements from the deepest level of the mind. Now Vipassana has become a part of my life—not a mere rite or ritual, but a way of life.

While the experiences that can arise in meditation are not to be compared nor given any valuation, nevertheless, relating them sometimes helps to inspire confidence in others who are struggling on the same path. But if certain of these experiences are taken as something which one must attain, then they create obstacles. A few instances will illustrate this point.

One meditator who had taken twenty or twenty-five courses read somewhere that when you concentrate on a small area below the nostrils and above the upper lip, you see a light and experience warmth. She had not experienced this, so she came to me with a long, sad face.

She was worried because she was not having a particular experience. This is not Vipassana. Even after many courses this student was giving importance to certain experiences over others, with no equanimity.

From my own experience, I had initially come to understand how the sensations arise, seem to stay for some time, and then pass away. After some practice the sensations which “seem to stay for some time” begin to

get disintegrated, and we reach the stage where only the arising and passing away of sensations is experienced.

When a severe pain is present somewhere in the body, we expect it to pass away quickly and naturally. After all, we are repeatedly told it is *anicca, anicca* (impermanent). But still the pain persists. One hour, two hours, two days, ten days and it still persists, so we get upset because it is not going. In my own case it remained for about two years. In my upper back there was a solid plate about eight inches by six inches and three quarters of an inch thick. It was so solid that tremendous pain began as soon as I sat for meditation. It wasn't there when I was not meditating. I patiently observed it with never a thought that it should go away. But it persisted for two years, and sometimes it became so hot it seemed as if you could prepare *chapatis* on it.

This solidity started melting and became liquid and began to move about within the same area, like water moving in a hot water bag. This lasted for about four to five months; then it started to disintegrate in the form of sparks, as if a live volcano was erupting. It was really hell-fire, not for a few days but for months together. Gradually the volcano has become quiet, but that area has become so sensitive that when anything happens outside or inside, there will immediately be a reaction on that part of the body. It is like a signal (as in Goenkaji's story about the private secretary), a warning signal for me to be aware.

No one should expect a similar experience, but the point to be noted is that sensations which are intense, solidified and gross do seem to "stay for some time"; but this "staying for some time" does not necessarily mean minutes, hours or days, but maybe years or even the whole lifetime. So very patiently, quietly we just observe, observe.

Another experience which may be of help to meditators is that in my tenth or eleventh course I could not feel sensations below the nostrils and the upper lip, nor anywhere else on the body for seven or eight days. I was equanimous with the situation and continued to do Anapana for those seven or eight days. No complaint, no advice sought. Just observed what it was.

Once it happened that after about seven or eight years of meditation, having taken a number of courses and assisting Goenkaji with the teaching work, there arose in me during one course a tremendous aversion to the discipline, rules and regulations. It began the first day at the first sitting and was so strong that it was not possible for me to do even a moment of Anapana. This continued for two full days. I had been telling students to return to Anapana when any difficulty arises. Now here I was in the same predicament.

Normally I find solutions to problems which arise by myself. So what to do? Despite being unable to do Anapana, there was no worry or tension. Sitting quietly doing nothing, after a few hours on the third day, I noticed that the resistance had cleared and I began working effortlessly with enthusiasm for the remainder of the course.

All these experiences have been very helpful for me in learning how to deal with different situations equanimously. May they serve the reader likewise on the path of Dhamma. ☺

Mr. N. H. Parikh

(Mr. Parikh, Vipassana Teacher, was among the first assistant teachers appointed by Goenkaji. He served Dhamma in various capacities for many years and made a significant contribution to the spread of Vipassana. He passed away peacefully at his residence in Mumbai last year.)

Inauguration of newly constructed Pagoda

A pagoda with 108 meditation cells has been newly constructed in Vipassana Kendra, *Dhamma Sota* (Sohna-Delhi). Prior to the opening of these cells for use, a group-sitting has been arranged there on 12 March 2006 from 9.00 a.m. to 11.00 a.m. All Vipassana meditators are cordially invited for the group sitting. For more details, contact:

Vipassana Sadhana Kendra,
Rahaka Village, Vallabharh-Sohna Road, Sohnā, Dist. Gurgaon. Telephone: 0124-2260066, 2260077

ONE DAY COURSE AT GLOBAL PAGODA

The Global Vipassana Foundation invites all Vipassana meditators for the one-day course on 19 March 2006. Goenkaji will be present during the course. This course is the first one-day course to be held within the dome of the main pagoda.

All efforts are being made to complete the dome at the earliest. This will be the largest stone dome structure in the world without any supporting pillars. The dome will not be complete before 19 March but the construction will have progressed sufficiently for the meditator to get a feel of how it will be when the dome is completed.

Everyone who meditates at the site will add to the purity of the atmosphere of this historic monument.

Date: 19 March 2006 (Sunday)

Time: 11:00 am to 5:00 pm

Venue: Main dome of the Global Pagoda,
Dhamma Pattana, Gorai, Mumbai.

Students/groups coming from outside Mumbai are kindly requested to inform the organizers in advance so that arrangements for bath and breakfast can be organized.

Contact: Mr. Derek Pegado, Tel: (022) 28452261, 28452111

Those who wish to serve the course may also contact the above. Please note that there are no facilities at the Global Pagoda for overnight stay. Those coming a day early will have to make their own arrangements.

GOENKAJI'S DISCOURSES ON TELEVISION

India: A new series of Hindi discourses by Goenkaji is being telecast daily at about 9:40 am on Aastha TV channel.

USA: Aastha will be telecasting Goenkaji's discourses at 6 pm EST (Monday to Friday) on the WORLDDIRECT platform of DIRECTV on channel no. 2005.

Zee TV: Daily, 4:30 am (IST). Please confirm exact timings.

CHILDREN'S COURSES IN MUMBAI

Date	Venue	Age	Registration
19 Feb	Ghatkopar	10-12 years	16 & 17 Feb
05 Mar	South Mumbai	13-16 years	2 & 3 March
19 Mar	Ghatkopar	13-16 years	16 & 17 March
26 Mar	JNPT	10-12 years	23 & 24 March

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

Course Venues: **Andheri:** Dada Saheb Gaikwad Sansthan, Babasaheb Ambedkar Marg, RTO Corner, Four Bungalows, Andheri (W), 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. **Ulhasnagar:** Guru Nanak High School, Kurla Camp, Ulhasnagar-4. Tel: (0251) 252-2693. **JNPT Vipassana Center:** JNPT Township, Trainee Hostel Bldg, Sector 3, Sheva Taluka, Uran, Navi Mumbai. 98923-87145, 98218-08488, 2747-2554. **South Mumbai:** Times of India Bldg., Opp CST Station. For registration and information call Tel 23081622 **Ghatkopar:** SNTD School, New Building, Cama Lane, Ghatkopar West, opp Vidyut Society, Mumbai 400086, Tel: 25101096, 25162505 **Dhamma Saritā:** Jivan Sandhya Mangal Sansthan, near Khadavli station -Tel: 25101096, 25162505 NB *Please bring cushion. *Please register on the specified phone numbers. If you are unable to attend after registration, please inform in advance. *Please arrive on time for the course. To serve children's courses in Mumbai, call 98200-22990.

NEW VRI PUBLICATIONS

Hindi Publications

1. Kendriya Karagriha Jaipur, Vipassana Ka Pratham Jail Shivar
2. Vipassana : Lokmat, Part-I

3. Vipassana : Lokmat, Part-II
4. Agrapal Rajvaidya Jivaka

Gujarati Publications

1. Nirmal Dhara Dharam Ki
2. Mangal Jage Grihi Jivan Men

Tamil Publications

1. The Discourse Summaries
2. The Gracious Flow of Dharma

NEW RESPONSIBILITIES

Ācaryas:

Mr. Sudhakar Funde, *Mumbai*

To assist area teachers in serving New Mumbai including Dhamma Vipula and JNPT

Mr. Gopal and Mrs Pushpa Singh, *Lucknow*

To serve Dhamma Lakkhana and Dhamma Svattthi

Senior Assistant Teachers:

Mr. Jitendrakumar Thakkar

To assist the Teachers in serving Dhamma Divākara

Mrs. Sabrina Katakam, *Hyderabad*

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Mr. Jayantilal and Mrs Kamala Thacker, *Gandhidham*

To serve South Gujarat

DHAMMA DOHAS

*Sānsa dekhate dekhate, mana avicala ho jāya;
Avicala mana niramala bane, sahaja mukta ho jāya.*

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

*Pala pala kṣaṇa kṣaṇa hoṣa rakha, apanā karma sudhāra;
Sukha se jīne kī kalā, apanī ora nihāra.*

Moment by moment keep your sanity,
rectify your own actions;

This is the art of living happily by observing yourself.

*With much metta,
A Vipassana meditator*

*Kṣaṇa kṣaṇa pratikṣaṇa sajaḡa raba, apanā hoṣa sambhāla;
Rāga dveṣa kī pratikeriyā, 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 prakatātā 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

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