

# Vipassana Newsletter

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

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## WORDS OF DHAMMA

*Sukho buddhānaṃ uppādo,  
sukhā saddhammadesanā;  
sukhā saṅghassa sāmaggī,  
sāmaggānaṃ tapo sukho.*

Happy is the arising of the Buddhas,  
Happy is the teaching of the sublime Dhamma;  
Happy is the harmony of the Sangha,  
Happy is the practice of those in harmony.

—Dhammapada 194

## For the Happiness and Welfare of Many

S. N. Goenka

(The following is an extract from 'Was the Buddha a Pessimist?' which is a translation of the VRI publication, 'Kyā Buddha Dukkhavādī The?')

Many people in India have criticized the root motivation for the going forth of Prince Siddhattha Gotama. They said that the going forth of only those ascetics is useful who leave home for homelessness with the intention of helping others. Siddhattha Gotama left home in search of the truth. Therefore, his going forth into homelessness was not proper.

They believe that the Buddha did not leave home to help others; he chose homelessness only to satisfy his curiosity or to serve himself and, therefore, his going forth was not logical or beneficial. It was a sad surprise for me to come across this comment. Even esteemed scholars did not know much about the facts of the Buddha's life. This is because the words of the Buddha have not been available in India for millennia.

When Prince Siddhattha grasped the realities of old age, disease and death, he was troubled but not just because he himself would one day have to endure this suffering. The truth is that he developed immense compassion for the countless beings who suffer these miseries. Then the question arose in his mind: is there a way out of this misery for all beings? He was confident that—

*Yathāpi dukkhe vijjante, sukhaṃ nāmapī vijjati,*

Where so many miseries exist, there also exists (ultimate) happiness;

*Evameva jāti vijjante, ajātīpi icchitabbakam;*

where (repeated) births exist, there also exists the desired state of unborn;

*Evam kilesapariruddho, vijjamāne sive pathe,*

for those encumbered by afflictions due to past

deeds, there is a noble path of deliverance;

*Pariyesissāmi taṃ maggaṃ bhavato parimuttiyā.*

(Buddhavaṃsa 2.9-16, Sumedhapatthanākathā)

I want to find out that path which gives liberation from the cycle of becoming.

He did not investigate the path of liberation only for himself, but to help all beings afflicted in the ocean of *samsāra*.

*Kim me ekena tiṇṇena, purisena thāmadassinā;*

What is the use of I alone gaining liberation and realising the truth through such strenuous efforts?

*Sabbaññutam pāpuṇitvā, santāressaṃ sadevakam.*

(Buddhavaṃsa 2.56, Sumedhapatthanākathā)

After attaining perfect enlightenment, I should become helpful to men and gods in their liberation.

It was natural that he had this intention. It was because of this wholesome volition that he went through so many lives as a *Bodhisatta*, fulfilling his *pāramis* (merits) by helping those with whom he came into contact.

Now this was the last life of that *Bodhisatta*. By attaining enlightenment, he became liberated and helped others to get liberated. Obviously, it was of primary importance to liberate himself. How can a blind man show the way to another blind man? How can a handicapped person help another handicapped person? How can one ensnared in a trap help other entrapped people to free themselves?

The aim to leave the householder's life was not just to fulfil his curiosity about the ultimate truth but to liberate himself in order to help many others. Therefore, it is incorrect and most unfortunate to imply that the Buddha did not take up the life of homelessness in order to help others.

**Truth is within: Why leave home to find it?**

One more criticism commonly levelled against the Buddha is that there was no need for him to leave household life to search for liberation because the ultimate truth of reality is within each person. However, this charge does not take into account the fact that the path to experience ultimate reality within oneself had been lost. Therefore, it was necessary to seek and rediscover the technique. Had Vipassana been available at the time, there would have been no need to rediscover it.

However, an Enlightened One arises only at a time when the technique of Vipassana is lost and only various *jhānas* (absorption or concentration techniques, encompassing mundane *jhānas* up to the eighth *jhāna*) remain. These *jhānas* are also to be found within ourselves and can be misleading and delusory. People take the bliss of any one of these *jhānas* to be the ultimate happiness, and do not practise to go beyond it. The technique of Vipassana that takes one to the state beyond the mundane field of all senses, including the mind, gets lost. A Bodhisatta rediscovers it through his own efforts.

It is also worth noting that after witnessing the three miserable states of life, Prince Siddhattha saw a *samaṇa* (an ascetic, especially one who believes in his own efforts for liberation). It is possible that the Prince—tormented by his comprehension of the misery inherent in the three states—spoke to this *samaṇa* who appeared so serene. The Prince might have learned from the ascetic that the ultimate truth is to be sought within oneself. However, one has to practise methodically, by following a systematic meditation technique. It cannot be done merely by staying at home. To practise it, one needed to leave the household life and go to various teachers of the *Samaṇa* tradition.

The influence of the *Samaṇa* tradition was very evident in Kapilavastu at the time of the Buddha. It had pagodas commemorating two of the three Buddhas before Gotama Buddha in this eon (Kakusandha and Koṇāgamana). Although Vipassana meditation of the *Samaṇa* tradition had been forgotten by that time, various concentration techniques (*jhānas*) had continued. Āḷāra Kālāma of the Kālāma republic, which lay to the east of Sākya kingdom, was a famous teacher of *jhānas*. While the main centre of his teaching was in Magadha, there was a branch in Kapilavastu also. Prince Siddhattha might have learned from the *samaṇa* he encountered that Āḷāra Kālāma was staying in Magadha at that time.

To learn the technique of introspection, it was necessary for Prince Siddhattha to leave home. So he went to Magadha to learn absorption concentrations up to the seventh *jhāna*. Through this practice, he experienced the bliss of deep absorption but not of ultimate liberation. Therefore, he went to another

teacher of the *Samaṇa* tradition, Uddaka Ramputta, and studied the eighth *jhāna*. Even this, the highest practice known at the time, did not result in his liberation from all suffering.

After this, he tried extreme, self-tormenting penances for six years. These also proved futile. Then, through his own efforts, he discovered the Noble Eightfold Path of morality, concentration and experiential wisdom. Through this Path he attained perfect enlightenment and became a *sammāsambuddha*. Perfect enlightenment is not achieved by reading scriptures or indulging in the intellectual acrobatics of philosophical beliefs. The Buddha could not receive it from any teacher because at that time the path of liberation had been lost to the world.

When one attains enlightenment, his heart and mind become full of infinite loving kindness and infinite compassion. He wants to distribute the benevolent practice to more and more people. This compassionate volition brought him to the Deer Park of Sarnath near Varanasi where he gave the Teaching for the first time to the five ascetics who had come from Kapilavastu. They became *arabats* (literally, those who have destroyed all their defilements) and tasted true lasting happiness. He stayed there for three months and showed the path of liberation to fifty-five more seekers. They also became *arabats*.

Thus, when sixty people had become *arabats*, he declared to them the well-known historic exhortation:

*Caratha, bhikkhave, cārikam*

Go your ways, O monks!

*Bahujanahitāya bahujanasukhāya lokānukampāya—*  
(*Vinaya Pitaka, Mahāvagga 32, Mārakathā*)

for the welfare of many, for the benefit of many,  
out of compassion for the world.

He declared, “Let not two go in the same direction”. Two *bhikkhus* should not travel together. They should go separately to different places so that more and more people can learn and benefit from Dhamma. He exhorted them to: “Teach the Dhamma that is beneficial in the beginning, beneficial in the middle and beneficial in the end; absolutely complete and totally pure”.

If one practises only *sīla* (morality), the starting point of this pure path of Dhamma, one becomes happy in this life and gets divine happiness after death. If one practises *samādhi* (concentration of mind), the middle part of Dhamma, one enjoys the bliss of absorption and after death gets *brahmic* happiness. And if one gets rid of all the *kammās* (conditionings) through the practice of *paññā* (penetrating wisdom)—the final part of the Path—then one experiences the infinite happiness of *nibbāna* and after death attains the eternal, steadfast and deathless state. In this manner, the Noble Eightfold Path is absolutely complete; there is no need to add anything to it. It is

absolutely pure; it contains no impurity that needs to be removed.

These sixty *arabats*, with compassionate hearts, helped many others throughout their lives. They had only one aim: *bahujanahitāya bahujanasukhāya*—the benefit and happiness of many.

In the remaining forty-five years of his life, the Buddha trained thousands of *arabats* to guide others; and he himself travelled to many places to distribute the nectar of Dhamma. His entire life was spent in distributing happiness. This *Samaṇa* tradition continued to teach Vipassana, which liberated innumerable people for centuries after the Buddha.

These unfortunate comments—that the Buddha’s motive in leaving home was not to help others; that he should have sought the ultimate truth while remaining at home—how will they be viewed by those people of the neighbouring countries of India who know the facts about benevolent Vipassana and by those who know the words of the Buddha and know that he worked day and night for the good, benefit and happiness of many? We are making a laughing stock of ourselves in front of our neighbours who know the truth about the Buddha. Let us not repeat these mistakes.

The Buddha has also been criticized for leaving behind his young wife and new-born child and his tearful parents. The critics forget that Siddhattha, after attaining enlightenment, helped them to gain the infinite happiness of liberation. If he had remained at home, he would have been able to give them only the lesser happiness of worldly comforts and companionship. Instead, his entire family attained full liberation. For centuries, serious Vipassana meditators have known through personal experience that this happiness of liberation from defilements is far superior to worldly happiness. ☺

#### EXHIBITION GALLERY AT GLOBAL PAGODA

A special exhibition gallery will be built in the Global Pagoda, which will throw light on the true nature of the historical personality of Gotama Buddha. This gallery will depict numerous important events of the life of the Buddha through the use of sophisticated state-of-the-art audio-visual technology.

In addition to research and publication work on Vipassana, the Vipassana Research Institute has taken up the important responsibility of setting up the exhibition gallery at the Global Pagoda. Meditators may share in the merits of this noble project. All donations to VRI enjoy 125 % income tax exemption.

The exhibition gallery will include about 400 life-sized fibreglass statues of monks, householders, etc., as well as animals, birds and numerous plastic bushes and trees. Vipassana meditators who have technical knowledge about production of these statues etc. or their materials or are acquainted with anyone having this expertise are requested to contact: Mr. Sri Prakash Goenka (Trustee, Vipassana Research Institute) Green House (second floor), Green Street, Mumbai 400 023. Tel: (022) 2266 4039, 2266 2113; Mobile: 98211-18635; Email: [ibtc@vsnl.com](mailto:ibtc@vsnl.com)

#### INCOME TAX EXEMPTION TO VRI

Income Tax exemption (125% deduction u/s 35(1)(iii) of IT Act granted earlier to Vipassana Research Institute by Revenue Department, Ministry of Finance, Government of India has been renewed and extended until 31 March 2007 vide Notification no. 44/2006 (F. No. 203/34/2004-ITA-II) dated 7 March 2006. This information is also available on [www.vri.dhamma.org](http://www.vri.dhamma.org), which can be downloaded and printed, if necessary.

#### NEW MEDITATION CENTER IN VENEZUELA

A property with facilities for 60 meditators was purchased on 23 March 2006 for a new Vipassana center in Venezuela. The previous owners constructed buildings about six years ago but never used it. The center is located about 90 minutes from the capital city, Caracas. It is in the countryside at 1400 metres (4000 feet) above sea level. It is surrounded by forests and small farms and enjoys good weather all year round. Goenkaji has named the new center, *Dhamma Venuvana* (Bamboo grove of Dhamma).

The first ten-day course was held on 5 April 2006. At present, courses will be for 50 students but facilities will be expanded to accommodate 80 students as soon as possible. The cost of the property was covered by donations and loans from Vipassana meditators. For more information, contact: Vipassana Venezuela, Sector Los Naranjos de Tasajera, Cerca de La Victoria, Estado Aragua, Venezuela. Tel: [58] (212) 414 5678; Email: [info@venuvana.dhamma.org](mailto:info@venuvana.dhamma.org) Website: [www.venuvana.dhamma.org](http://www.venuvana.dhamma.org)

#### CHILDREN'S COURSES IN MUMBAI

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

Date	Venue	Age	Registration
21 May	Ghatkopar	13-16 years	18 & 19 May
4 June	South Mumbai	10-12 years	1 & 2 June
11 June	Ulhasnagar	13-16 years	8 & 9 June
11 June	Andheri	10-12 years	8 & 9 June
18 June	Ghatkopar	10-12 years	15 & 16 June
25 June	Matunga	13-16 years	22 & 23 June
2 July	South Mumbai	13-16 years	28 & 29 June
9 July	Ulhasnagar	10-12 years	6 & 7 July
16 July	Ghatkopar	13-16 years	13 & 14 July
30 July	Matunga	10-12 years	27 & 28 July
6 Aug	South Mumbai	10-12 years	3 & 4 Aug
13 Aug	Ulhasnagar	13-16 years	10 & 11 Aug
13 Aug	Andheri	13-16 years	10 & 11 Aug
20 Aug	Ghatkopar	10-12 years	17 & 18 Aug
27 Aug	JNPT	10-12 years	24 & 25 Aug

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. **Ghatkopar:** SNDT School, New Building, Cama Lane, Ghatkopar West, opp Vidyut Society, Mumbai 400086, Tel: 25101096, 25162505. **JNPT:** Trainee Hostel Bldg, Sector 3, Sheva Taluka, Uran, Navi Mumbai. 98923-87145, 98218-08488, 2747-2554. **Matunga:** Amulakh Amirchand High School, Rafi Ahmed Kidwai Road, New SNDT College, King's Circle, Matunga (CR), Tel: 2510-1096, 2516-2505. **Ulhasnagar:** Guru Nanak High School, Kurla Camp, Ulhasnagar-4. Tel: (0251) 252-2693. **South Mumbai:** Times of India Bldg., Opp CST station. For registration, call 2308-1622 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.

#### GOENKAJI'S DISCOURSES ON TELEVISION

**Hungama TV channel:** Hindi discourses telecast daily from 4.30 to 6.00 am (IST). **Aastha TV channel:** Daily at about 9:40 am. **Zee TV:** Daily, 4:30 am (IST). **USA:** **Aastha TV** will be telecasting Goenkaji's discourses at 6 pm EST (Monday to Friday) on the **WORLDDIRECT** platform of **DIRECTV** on channel no. 2005.

## PALI WORKSHOP AT LUCKNOW

A Pali workshop has been organized at DDU State Institute of Rural Development, Bakshi Ka Talab, Lucknow from 7 July to 18 July 2006. Vipassana meditators who wish to take part in this workshop may contact: 1. Mr. Pankaj Jain, Tel: (0522) 278-1896, Mobile: 98391-20032. 2. Mr. Pawan Agarwal, Tel: (0522) 226-6319, Mobile: 94150-18332

## NEW APPOINTMENTS

### Assistant Teachers:

1. Mr. Mahendra Kolte, *Dhamma Giri*
2. Mr. Nivrutti Patil, *Kolhapur*
3. Ms. Macarena Infante, *Chile*
4. Mrs. Eva Dieterman, *The Netherlands*

### Children's Course Teachers:

1. Mr. Prahlad M. Pagare, *Bhabha Nagar, Rajasthan*
2. Mr. Vishambarnath Sethi, *Jaipur, Rajasthan*
3. Mrs. Sashi Singh, *Bharatpur, Rajasthan*
4. Mr. Chiranjeev Choudhary, *Indore*
5. Mrs. Shubhada Shreshta, *Nepal*
6. Mr. Dharma Raj Shakya, *Nepal*
7. Mrs. Dharma Kumari Moktan, *Nepal*
8. Mrs. Nitiporn Chumchujan, *Thailand*

## PUBLIC TALK BY GOENKAJI IN MUMBAI

A public talk by Goenkaji has been arranged at Police Kavayat Maidan, Railway Police Quarters, Pantnagar, Near Garudiya Nagar, Ghatkopar (East), Mumbai 400 075 on 27 May 2006 from 7 pm to 8 pm followed by a question-answer session.  
Contact: 2527-6868, 98690-63990, 2512-0959.

## VIPASSANA IN ABU DHABI

Eight boys and six girls, aged 8 to 12 years, participated in the first children's course in Abu Dhabi in April 2006. The next course will be for children aged 13 to 16 years.

**One-day Vipassana courses** are also conducted periodically.

**Group meditation:** Every Thursday (8 to 9 pm) and Friday (10 to 11 am) at Flat # 801, Abu Dhabi Pharmacy Building, Next to Mitsubishi Motors, Nazda Street, Abu Dhabi.

**Contact:** Mr. Ram, Abu Dhabi, Tel. Res. 02-677-1143; Mobile: 050-570-3945;

## Winter Schedule of Dhamma Giri and Dhamma Tapovana

### Dhamma Giri and Dhamma Tapovana:

**Teachers' Self Course (15-day):** 2 Nov to 17 Nov. **Workshop for Dhamma servers and trustees:** 18 and 19 Nov. **VRI Research Council Meeting:** 19 Nov (Sunday, 9.30 to 11 am)

### Dhamma Tapovana:

**AT Training Workshop:** 11 Oct (evening) to 15 Oct 2006 (noon). **Ten-day executive course:** 19 Oct to 30 Oct. **60-day:** 22 Nov 2006 to 22 Jan 2007. **45-day:** 28 Jan to 14 March 2007.

**Dhamma Giri: AT Meeting:** 22 Jan (morning) to 24 Jan 2007 (evening). (**Dhamma Thali, Jaipur:** 30/45 day: Jan or Feb 2007. Course dates to be finalized.)

## Khmer-English Ten-Day Course at Dhamma Giri

A ten-day Vipassana course in Khmer and English will be held in *Dhamma Giri* for Cambodian students from 4 to 15 October 2006. Cambodians who wish to sit or serve this course may contact: Ms. Lisa Chey, Email: ms\_apsara@yahoo.com

## DHAMMA DOHAS

*Bāhara bāhara bhātakate, dukkhiyā rabe jāhāna;  
Antaramana meñ kboja lī, sukha kī khāna khajāna.*

Always straying outward, the world remains miserable;  
By searching the depths of the mind,  
you tap the treasure-lode of happiness.

*Hośa jage jaba dharama kā, hove dūra pramāda;  
Svadarśana karate hue, cakhe mukti kā svāda.*

When the clarity of Dhamma arises, delusion is dispelled;  
Observing yourself, you taste the savor of liberation.

*With much metta,  
A Vipassana meditator*

*Tṛṣṇā jāda se khoda kara, anāsakta bana jāñya;  
Bhava bandhana se chutana kā, yahī eka upāya.*

Dig out craving by the roots and become detached;  
This is the only way to break the bonds of becoming.

*Bhogata bhogata bhogate, bandhana bandhate jāñya;  
Dekhata dekhata dekhate, bandhana khulate jāñya.*

Rolling, rolling in pleasure and pain, we keep tying knots;  
Observing, observing, observing, we open all the knots.

*With best compliments from*

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