

# Vipassana Newsletter

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

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## WORDS OF DHAMMA

*Ārogyaparamā lābhā,  
santutthiparamam dhanam;  
vissāsaparamā nāti,  
nibbānam paramam sukham.*

Health is the highest gain,  
Contentment is the greatest wealth;  
The trustworthy are the best kinsmen,  
Nibbāna is the highest bliss.

—Dhammapada 204

## GRATITUDE TO SRI LANKA

*(The following is excerpted from the question-answer session on 16 May 2006 following Goenkaji's discourse at the Bandaranayake Memorial International Convention Hall, Colombo, Sri Lanka on invitation from the Ministry of Religious Affairs as part of the celebrations of the 2550th year of Buddha's Mahāparinibbāna. It has been adapted for the Newsletter.)*

Question: Are Satipaṭṭhāna and Vipassana the same?

Goenkaji: Exactly the same.

Is it possible to attain nibbāna in this lifetime?

Goenkaji: Yes, it is possible.

What is the role of Sri Lanka in preserving Buddha Dhamma?

Goenkaji: A wonderful role. Sri Lanka held the fourth Saṅgāyana and became an important link in preserving the words of the Buddha. It was all the more important because the teaching was committed to writing here. Pariyatti is very important to keep the purity of Paṭipatti. Now is the time for the Buddha Dhamma to arise again with the help of Vipassana. The bhikkhus have to play an important role in this along with lay people.

Can a householder attain the path and fruit of nibbāna without getting ordained?

Goenkaji: One can if one walks on the path of Dhamma.

Can the practice of mettā alone lead you to nibbāna?

Goenkaji: Mettā is good but to reach nibbāna one has to eradicate the anusaya kilesa, which is possible only with the practice of Vipassana. Nibbāna is freedom from all craving, aversion and ignorance. To attain it, one has to eradicate these defilements.

Why start with Anapana and not Buddhānussati?

Goenkaji: For those who already have devotion to

Buddha, it may be a beginning but just a beginning. One has to go further and practice Anapana to walk on the path of Dhamma.

What is the importance of sampajañña?

Goenkaji: To remain aware of sensations and to be equanimous to sensations all the time is very important for the purification of mind.

Some people criticize that Vipassana is only a meditation technique and not the essence of Buddha Dhamma.

Goenkaji: What else is the essence of the teaching of the Buddha! The practice of sīla, samādhi and paññā is the complete teaching of the Buddha.

Why are non-Buddhists in the West accepting Vipassana?

Goenkaji: Because the nature of the Buddha's teaching is such that its practice, Vipassana meditation, benefits one and all. There is no conversion involved. One becomes a better human being.

It is believed that Vipassana is very serious and suitable only for monks.

Goenkaji: Certainly it is very suitable for monks but it is also essential for householders! Even at the time of the Buddha, so many householders attained high stages. Of course, it is very easy for monks as they have dedicated their lives to the teaching. They have a great responsibility to progress on the path of Dhamma and to help others on the path of Dhamma.

What is the best way to do Buddha puja?

Goenkaji: The Buddha himself explained on many occasions what is proper Buddha puja (worship of Buddha). Just before his mahāparinibbāna (passing away) when flowers were being showered on him, he said that this is not a proper veneration of the Buddha. He pointed out to two bhikkhus who were meditating seriously at a distance at that time and said that they were venerating the Buddha in the right way.

*I practice dāna and sīla to secure a better afterlife. Why meditate?*

Goenkaji: *Dāna* and *sīla* will give you birth in some heavenly realm but it is temporary and you may be born in lower realms again in the future. It is important to eradicate mental impurities to come out of all misery. That is the true teaching of the Buddha. *Samādhi* and *Paññā* are essential.

*Out of the four satipaṭṭhānas, why do you not give importance to dhammānupassanā and cittānupassanā?*

Goenkaji: When you become perfect in *vedanānupassanā*, you automatically become perfect in *kāyānupassanā* because *vedanā* is part of *kāya*. Even when one is practicing *cittānupassanā* or *dhammānupassanā*, *vedanā* (sensation) plays a very important role. Anything that arises in the *citta*, which is called *dhammā*, is bound to manifest as *vedanā* in the body. The importance of *vedanā* is the great discovery of the Buddha. So when you become perfect in *vedanānupassanā*, the other three automatically get strengthened. *Vedanā* is the essence.

*Have you met any sotāpannas or arahats in this lifetime?*

Goenkaji: Yes, I was very fortunate to be close to an *arahat* and I met a number of *sotāpannas*.

*How do you convince so many students to take the Triple Gem?*

Goenkaji: I explain to them that they are taking refuge in the qualities. There is no Buddha now who will liberate them. Even at the time of the Buddha, he only showed the path. One takes refuge in the qualities of the Buddha to get inspiration. The Buddha is the personification of Dhamma—the universal path of total liberation. Refuge in the Sangha is not a refuge in any individual. One takes refuge in the qualities of the saintly Sangha. I don't aim to convert anyone. Let a Hindu remain a Hindu but let him become a Dhammic Hindu, a Dharmika Hindu, a good Hindu. Similarly, Muslims should become good Muslims, Christians should become good Christians, Sikhs should become good Sikhs, and Buddhists should become good Buddhists. ☺

## MEETING WITH ATs AND DHAMMA SERVERS 13 MAY 2006 AT COLOMBO

Goenkaji reminded everyone present at the meeting that Buddha's teaching is always universal and to limit it to one section of humanity is to devalue it. Perhaps this was also partly the reason why Buddha Dhamma vanished from India. The Buddha is above all sectarian divisions. His teaching is not to gather disciples or to divide people into groups but aims at the single goal of liberation from misery.

When asked what time is the auspicious time to start an important work, he said whenever one starts a wholesome work, that is the auspicious time! He

discouraged all *pūjās* (worships) and rituals at a centre at any time.

To the question of whether servers at a centre should take a course every year, he said that there are no employees at a Vipassana centre. Each one must be a meditator. Some of them may get some remuneration but they are all basically Dhamma servers. When the term of a trustee comes to an end, he or she should serve with even more enthusiasm.

New trustees are appointed to encourage new people and to give them an opportunity to serve. The old ones continue to serve. Otherwise they were not serving Dhamma, they were merely serving trusteeship. Goenkaji also said that more non-centre courses should be organized, which are very important for the spread of Dhamma. Goenkaji encouraged the Sri Lankan assistant teachers and Dhamma servers to sit and serve courses at *Dhamma Giri*.

When asked about the principle of not permitting the donor of the land to a centre to live immediately adjacent to the centre, he said that this was because sometimes the donor gets too attached to the centre and starts interfering in all its activities. Such a person harms himself and harms others.

To the question of how to keep the purity of the tradition without being disrespectful to other traditions, Goenkaji said that if one is disrespectful to other traditions then one starts harming one's own tradition. One must observe the principles of one's own tradition scrupulously during Vipassana activities at centres and outside but this does not preclude one from respecting other traditions. Goenkaji gave the example of Emperor Asoka who wrote in his edicts:

*One should not honour only one's own religion and condemn other faiths. Instead one should honour other religions for various reasons. By so doing one helps one's own religion to grow, and also renders service to the religions of others. In acting otherwise, one digs the grave of one's own religion, and harms other religions as well.*

*Someone, who honours his own religion and condemns other religions, may do so out of devotion to his religion thinking 'I will glorify my religion,' but his actions injure his own religion more gravely.*

*Let all listen: Concord is good, not quarrelling. Let all be willing to listen to the doctrine professed by others. ☺*

Goenkaji's message in the souvenir published to commemorate the start of the construction work at *Dhamma Sobhā*:

*It gives me great joy to know that Dhamma Sobhā, the second Vipassana centre in Sri Lanka, is being established in the sacred Dhamma island in the 2550th anniversary year of the Buddha's mahāparinibbāna.*

*Sri Lanka has played a crucial role in preserving Buddha Dhamma through the millennia. After India lost the Saddhamma, Myanmar and Sri Lanka supported*

each other through the centuries to preserve the purity of Dhamma and Vinaya. This effort ensured that the Teaching of the Buddha is available to the world today in its pristine purity.

*When I think of Sri Lanka, my heart is filled with deep gratitude for the glorious role that this Dhamma island has played in continuing the tradition of Dhamma Saṅgāyanas (Synods). India lost the tradition because it lost its Tipitakadharas, Dhammadharas, Vinayadharas, Suttadharas etc. However, the Dhammic King Vattagāminī convened not only the Synod but also committed the Teaching of the Buddha into written form for the first time at the Fourth Saṅgāyana at Aluvihara in Sri Lanka. He thus ensured that the words of the Buddha would remain available in pure form for future generations. What a historic contribution!*

*At the time of Buddhaghosa, there was a close link between the Sangha of South India and Sri Lanka. Now this mutually beneficial relationship should be renewed. Truly, the Buddha's Sangha—Bhikkhus, Bhikkhunis, Upasakas and Upasikas—is like an ocean where various rivers come together and acquire one taste! People of all races and nationalities find solace in the universal Saddhamma, which unites people in harmony. There is no place for any divisiveness in the Buddha's sublime teaching.*

*Now Sri Lanka is going through a period of renewed enthusiasm for Saddhamma. This makes me confident that Sri Lanka has a peaceful and prosperous future.*

*Dhamma centres like Dhamma Sobhā are bound to play a significant role in spreading the universal teaching of the Buddha and in bringing peace and happiness to all the people of this great nation.*

*May all beings be happy, peaceful and liberated!*

*Ciraṃ Tiṭṭhatu Saddhammo! ☺*

#### **GOENKAJI VISIT TO CHENNAI: 19 – 22 MAY 2006**

After the successful visit to Sri Lanka, Goenkaji stopped at *Dhamma Setu*, Chennai Vipassana centre on the way to Mumbai on 19 May. *Dhamma Setu* is located in Thirumudivakkam village, about 6 kms from Pallavaram and 10 kms from Chennai Airport. Shortly after his arrival, Goenkaji gave a press interview to a journalist from New India Express.

The next day was a busy day for Goenkaji. In the morning, he gave a talk 'Productivity in Crisis' to about 80 business executives at *Dhamma Setu*. Goenkaji ended the talk by asking the executives to give ten days of their life and take part in a Vipassana course for their own benefit and for the benefit of many others. This was followed by a lively question-answer session.

The pilgrims on the Sri Lanka yatra arrived at *Dhamma Setu* in groups. Excellent arrangements had been made for their stay at the Vipassana centre. Meditators from all over South India had come to *Dhamma Setu* for the inauguration of the Pagoda in the presence of Goenkaji. Goenkaji met groups of meditators and pilgrims before lunch.

In the evening, Goenkaji delivered a discourse 'A Journey through the Mind—Discovering Peace and Happiness' at the Music Academy in Chennai.

On 21 May, the pilgrims and other visitors meditated in the magnificent new pagoda. After the group meditation, the pagoda was inaugurated in the presence of Goenkaji and Mataji and the pagoda was crowned with the sacred umbrella.

Meditators from different centres in South India met Goenkaji and sought his guidance in the morning of 22 May. Some of the pilgrims also met him in groups. Goenkaji and Mataji left *Dhamma Setu* in the evening and reached Mumbai at night.

#### **NEW VIPASSANA CENTER IN INDORE**

Indore Vipassana Centre, *Dhamma Mālva*, is being constructed at Jambudi Hapsi village, Hatod Road, Opposite Gommatgiri, near Pitru Hill, about 6 kms from Indore airport. The Dhamma hall will be built in the first phase. The estimate for construction of dining halls, kitchen, office and accommodation blocks for 120 students and pagoda is about Rs. 2 crores (20 million). Donations to the Indore Vipassana Trust are exempted from income tax under Section 80G. **Contact:** Indore Vipassana Centre, 582, M. G. Road (Web Duniya), Labh Ganga Indore. Tel: 0731-3983373; Mobile: 98937-88909

#### **VIPASSANA NEWSLETTER ON THE WEBSITE**

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**IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT:** Vipassana Newsletter or Patrika is being sent to all new students in India free of charge as a special privilege. If you wish to continue receiving privilege copies of the Newsletter in 2006, please cut this portion and send it, along with the pasted label on the reverse, to VRI, Patrika Section, Dhamma Giri, Igatpuri 422 403. Otherwise, it will be assumed that you do not wish to receive the Newsletter and further copies will not be sent. You can also choose to become a lifetime or annual subscriber of the Vipassana Newsletter. (Meditators who have already paid the subscription need not send any response.) **Subscribers who are not receiving a copy or have changed their address should also write to the above address.** Annual Subscription: 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. Please tick one of the following options:

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## CHILDREN'S COURSES IN MUMBAI

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

Date	Venue	Age	Registration
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:** SNTD 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 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. **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.

## NEW VIPASSANA CENTRES

**First Vipassana centre in Kerala, India:**

*Dhamma Ketana* (Sign of Dhamma)

**Second Vipassana centre in Japan:**

*Dhammādicca* (Sun of Dhamma)

## NEW RESPONSIBILITIES IN SRI LANKA

1. Ven. Ratanapala (*Bhikkhu Ācārya*)

To serve *Dhamma Sobhā* and Sri Lanka

2. Mrs. Damayanthi Ratwatte (*Ācārya*)

To serve *Dhamma Kūta* and Sri Lanka

**Senior Assistant Teachers**

3. & 4. Mr. Roy Menezes and Mrs. Suleka Puswella, USA

To assist Ven. Ratanapala and Mrs. Damayanthi Ratwatte to serve

Sri Lanka and to assist Mr. John & Mrs. Gail Beary to serve

*Dhamma Vaddhana* (California, USA)

## NEW RESPONSIBILITIES

**Regional Teachers:** Mr. John & Mrs. Joanna Luxford, UK

To serve Europe including AT Training in Europe

**Senior Assistant Teachers:** U Thein Aung, Myanmar

To serve courses for bhikkhus in Myanmar

## ADDITIONAL RESPONSIBILITY

**Ācāryas:** Mr. Gopal Sharan & Mrs. Pushpa Singh, Lucknow

To serve *Dhamma Licchavī* (Vaishali), *Dhamma Bodhi* (Bodhi

Gaya) and Vipassana activities in Bihar as well as *Dhamma*

*Lakkhana* (Lucknow) and *Dhamma Suvattthi* (Sravasti)

## NEW APPOINTMENTS

**Assistant Teachers:**

1. Mr. Bikram Dandiya, *Igatpuri* 2. Mr. Eric Lataste, *France*

**Children Course Teachers:**

1. Mrs. Asha Tiwari, *Ratlam*

2. Ms. Nirmala V. Mansingani, *Anand, Gujarat*

## DHAMMA DOHAS

*Śīlavāna ke dhyāna se, pragyā jāgrata hoyā;  
Cita samatā meṅ sthita hove, uttama maṅgala hoyā.*

When a person of morality concentrates, insight awakens;  
The mind becomes steadfast in equanimity;  
This is the greatest happiness.

*Jisake mana pragyā jage, hoyā vinamra vinīta;  
Jisa dālī para phala lageṅ, jhukane kī hī rīta.*

If wisdom arises in your mind,  
You become humble and modest;  
As a branch laden with fruit is sure to bow low.

*With much metta,  
A Vipassana meditator*

*Dhana āe to bāvare, mata kara garaba gumāna;  
Yaha bālū kī bhīnta hai, isakā kyā abhimāna?*

If wealth comes, oh child, do not be vain and haughty.  
It is a castle made of sand; why be proud of it?

*Mata kara mata kara bāvare! Ahaṅkāra abhimāna;  
Badoṅ badoṅ kā miṭa gayā, jaga se nāma niśāna.*

Don't do it, fool, don't do it! Don't be proud and haughty.  
All trace of the high and mighty has vanished from the world.

*With best compliments from*

**MOTILAL BANARSIDASS**

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