

# 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

*Mātā-pitu-upatthānam,  
puttadārassa saṅgaho,  
anākulā ca kammantā—  
etaṃ maṅgalamuttamaṃ.*

Serving one's parents,  
Caring for spouse and children,  
A simple occupation—  
This is the highest blessing.

—Khuddaka pāṭha 5.6, Maṅgala Sutta

## Acharya S. N. Goenka in the Golden Land of Myanmar - II

(This is the second and concluding part of the report on Goenkaji's stay in Myanmar in December 2004 and January 2005.)

On 27 January 2005, Goenkaji spoke about *sammā samādhi* (right concentration) and about the importance of natural breath as the object of concentration. There are many objects with the help of which one can concentrate the mind. The Buddha gave forty such objects of concentration but he mainly taught *ānāpāna-sati*—observation of the natural respiration, as it is.

The Buddha described *sammā-samādhi* as *kusala cittassa ekaggatā*. One is practising proper *samādhi* when one concentrates on respiration, without craving and aversion; that is, with a pure mind. Goenkaji then explained how one embarks upon a step-by-step journey of self-exploration during a ten-day Vipassana course.

On 28 January, Goenkaji gave a talk in the morning at the International Theravada Buddhist Missionary University. The peaceful campus with its many trees, shaded pathways, magnificent buildings and dedicated students—mostly monks and nuns from diverse traditions—brings sublime delight to anyone who goes there.

Goenkaji spoke about how he was attracted to the Buddha's teaching. Explaining the importance of *vedanā* (sensations), he said that so long as one is not aware of sensations, one keeps thinking that the outside objects are responsible for craving and aversion. One thinks, "This is desirable" or "This is not desirable". For example, an alcoholic thinks that he is addicted to alcohol. He is actually addicted to the sensations that he feels when he drinks alcohol. But one is not merely addicted to alcohol; one is

addicted to various defilements such as anger, hatred, fear, and lust.

If one keeps on reacting blindly to pleasant and unpleasant sensations, one generates *sankhāras* (mental volitional actions) of craving (*lobha*) and aversion (*dosa*); one thereby multiplies one's misery. If one learns to maintain equanimity in the face of pleasant and unpleasant sensations, one starts changing the habit pattern at the deepest level of mind and starts coming out of misery.

The sensations are the root. As long as one neglects the roots, the poisonous tree will grow again even if the trunk is cut down. The Buddha said that just as a tree with roots intact and secure, though cut down, sprouts again; even so while latent craving is not rooted out, misery springs up again and again.

Thus, this super-scientist discovered that to become fully liberated from mental defilements, one has to work at the root of the mind. One must cut asunder the roots of *taṇhānusaya* (latent craving).

By developing understanding of the impermanent nature of sensations, one develops *paññā* (wisdom) in response to sensations. When one observes sensations in this manner, one starts coming out of ignorance and understands the law of nature. The Buddha called this *dhamma-niyāmatā*.

Goenkaji emphasized the universal nature of Dhamma and said that the practice of morality, the development of a disciplined mind and the development of a pure mind are common to all religions and hence acceptable to all religions. "Purity of mind is the greatest common denominator of all religions," Sayagyi U Ba Khin used to say. The practice of Vipassana is the way to purify the mind.

At the end of the talk, Goenkaji advised the

students of the university (many of whom would probably be travelling around the world to teach Dhamma) that they should never condemn other religions or other traditions. Goenkaji said that he had learned this from his teacher Sayagyi and quoted from an edict carved on a rock pillar by the great Indian emperor Asoka:

“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.”

Goenkaji added that the specialty of the Buddha’s teaching is that it is practical. Therefore, the students should make sure that they don’t ignore the practical aspect of Dhamma while studying its theoretical aspect.

In the evening, delivering the third lecture of the series, Goenkaji spoke about *paññā* (purifying wisdom). He explained how it was a great discovery of Buddha that one generates *taṇhā* (craving) in response to *vedanā* (sensations). The Buddha discovered that whatever arises in the mind is accompanied by sensations on the body—*vedanāsamosaṇā sabbe dhammā*. Every thought that arises in the mind is accompanied by a sensation on the body. Therefore, when one is working with sensations, one is working at the depth of the mind.

It is unfortunate that different religions have become so compartmentalized and intolerant, creating untold strife and violence. Goenkaji explained that the Buddha’s teaching always brings people together. Dhamma never divides people; Dhamma unites them. Therefore, Dhamma has an important role to play in bringing peace to the world.

Goenkaji said that he firmly believes that Myanmar will be a fountainhead of Dhamma and that the Global Pagoda in India will be a lighthouse of Dhamma during the Second Buddha Sāsana.

On the evening of 29 January, Goenkaji spoke in Hindi to the expatriate Indians at the Panchayati Wadi Dharamshala in downtown Yangon. He said that all Indians are proud of their ancient heritage of spirituality. He advised them to use intellect and logic in judging any spiritual tradition. Goenkaji explained the true meaning of the word “Dharma”. The term *Bauddha Dharma* was not used until about five hundred years after the Buddha; the term *Hindu Dharma* originated much later. This shows that in

ancient India, Dharma was used in its real meaning by all traditions. Dharma means law: the law of nature, the law of cause and effect; the relationship of mind and matter.

Goenkaji said that nature gives immediate results: the moment one’s mind is defiled, one becomes miserable and the moment one’s mind is pure, one is filled with *mettā* (loving kindness), *karuṇā* (compassion), *muditā* (sympathetic joy) and *upekkhā* (equanimity). One gets an immediate reward: one feels happy and peaceful.

In this detailed talk, Goenkaji touched upon all major areas of misconceptions about the Buddha: that the Buddha’s teaching is deceptive; that it is pessimistic; that it made India a weak country; that Asoka disbanded his army after he started following the Buddha’s teaching, and so on. He urged the expatriate Indians in Myanmar to understand the true teaching of the Buddha and to avoid making misinformed statements about the Buddha. Most importantly, he said, they should give a trial to Vipassana, the practical aspect of his teaching, in order to live a happier and more peaceful life.

As he walked out of the hall at the end of the talk—his last public engagement in Myanmar during this visit—Goenkaji chanted:

*Jisa dharatī ne janama diyā,  
usa dharatī ko hama namana karenī;  
jisa dharatī ne dharama diyā,  
usa dharatī ko hama naman karenī...*

To the land that gave me birth,  
To that land I pay respect;  
To the land that gave me Dhamma,  
To that land I pay respect ...

May the people of Myanmar be happy, peaceful and prosperous!

*Ciram Tīṭṭhatu Saddhammo*—May the true Dhamma endure for long! ■

### GOENKAJI AND MATAJI VISIT NASHIK

On the evening of 5 March 2005, Goenkaji and Mataji visited *Dhamma Nasikā*, Nashik Vipassana Centre for the first time. *Dhamma Nasikā* is being built on a secluded 17-acre plot just outside the city of Nashik. The land has been given by Nashik Municipal Corporation. The centre is already hosting courses but limited facilities allow courses for only men or only women at this stage.

When Goenkaji arrived in Nashik, he was welcomed informally at the gate of the centre by the ex-Mayor of Nashik, Mr. Dashrath Patil. Then some of the trustees and assistant teachers along with the architect of the centre accompanied Goenkaji to the highest point of the centre from where they could see the entire centre as well as most of the city of Nashik. They explained the future development plan to Goenkaji.

Meanwhile, more than a thousand Vipassana

meditators had arrived at the centre to meditate in the open in the presence of Goenkaji. Goenkaji and Mataji joined the meditation session around 6.20 pm. After the *mettā* session at the end of the sitting, Goenkaji gave a short Dhamma talk. He explained the proper way to manage a centre and the proper way to serve at a centre.

He reiterated the fundamental principles on which all the centres around the world are run. He warned against starting a business of Dhamma. "A Dhamma centre should serve all, irrespective of their caste, creed and social background. It should never become the property of a handful of rich people."

He emphasized the non-commercial nature of the centre and the importance of selfless Dhamma service without expecting anything in return. There is no question of the assistant teachers getting any material benefits but occasionally full-time Dhamma servers may be given some financial assistance if they need it. However, whether one is getting any financial assistance or not, whether one is an assistant teacher or a new volunteer—everyone is a Dhamma server. Only meditators with such volition are fit to stay and serve at a Vipassana centre.

Even though a Dhamma server is not sitting on the Dhamma seat and explaining Dhamma, he is still gaining enormous merits by participating in the Dhamma dāna. "*Sabbadānaṃ dhammadānaṃ jināti*—the gift of Dhamma excels all gifts." Whether one is serving at a centre or contributing otherwise to the development of a centre, one is giving the gift of Dhamma. This brings immense joy now as well as in the future.

Goenkaji and Mataji left *Dhamma Nasikā* after the talk. Though the centre has been hosting ten-day courses for the past few months, all the Dhamma servers felt that Goenkaji's visit was the true inauguration of *Dhamma Nasikā*.

Goenkaji and Mataji returned to Nashik Road on 6 March to give a public talk at the Indian Railways Institute of Electrical Engineering, Nashik Road (IRIEEN). Thousands had gathered at this venue outside the city to listen to the talk. Mr. S. P. Khade, the Director of the institute, requested Goenkaji to give a Dhamma talk. Goenkaji explained the true meaning of Dharma (Dhamma in Pali). On the way to IRIEEN, Goenkaji and Mataji stopped at Dadasaheb Gaikwad Kendra for meditation and *mettā* under the newly constructed Myanmar (Burmese) style pagoda.

#### FIRST VIPASSANA COURSE AT YASHADA, PUNE

The Director General of Yashwantrao Chavan Academy of Development Administration (YASHADA), the apex training institute of Government of Maharashtra, felt that incorporating Vipassana in training would help to develop positive attitude in government officers. Therefore, a training program called Attitudinal Development and Stress Management was arranged at YASHADA from 22 February to 4 March 2005.

35 personnel attended the Vipassana course including IAS and IPS officers, faculty from the Academy itself as well as officers from other government departments. All arrangements were made to see that the participants coming

from all over the state gained full benefit from the course. The next course at YASHADA will start from 5 May.

This program and a three-day course for old students will be organized every 2 months. In addition, there will be a one-day course every third Sunday and group sitting every Saturday at 6 pm in YASHADA meditation hall. This hall will also be open to meditators for daily meditation.

#### GRATEFUL COMMEMORATION

The following Senior Assistant Teachers and Assistant Teachers have passed away.

1. Ms. Melba Deslandes, France, SAT
2. Mr. Rajaram Beri, Kolhapur, SAT
3. Mr. Pravinchandra Shah, Mumbai, SAT
4. Mrs. Helen Ranke, Australia, SAT
5. Ms. Malini Parulekar, Pune, AT
6. Mr. Anantraï Gandhi, Mumbai, AT
7. Mr. Karamchand Leal, UK, AT

They served the Dhamma selflessly and lived exemplary lives full of Dhamma. They will continue to be inspiring examples in the way they lived their lives. May they be happy, peaceful and liberated!

*idha nandati pecca nandati,  
katapuñño ubhayattha nandati;  
puññaṃ me katanti nandati,  
bhiiyo nandati suggatiṃ gato.*

—*Dhammapada* 18

Here one is happy, hereafter one is happy,  
The doer of good deeds is happy in both existences.  
"Good have I done" (thinking thus), he is happy,  
He is happier still when he goes to a blissful state.

#### CHILDREN'S COURSES IN MUMBAI

Date	Venue	Age	Registration
10 April	Ulhasnagar	13-16 years	7 and 8-4
17 April	JNPT, Navi Mumbai	13-16 years	14 and 15-4
8 May	Andheri	13-16 years	5 and 6-5
8 May	Mulund	13-16 years	5 and 6-5
15 May	Ulhasnagar	10-12 years	12 and 13-5
22 May	JNPT, Navi Mumbai	10-12 years	19 and 20-5

#### Residential Courses (call 2510-1096, 2516-2505 to register)

23 to 24-4	Khadavli Ashram	13-16 years	14 and 15-4
21 to 22-5	Khadavli Ashram	10-12 years	13 and 14-5

**Course Timing:** 8:30 am to 2:30 pm **Registration Timings:** 11 am to 1 pm. **Course Venues:** **Andheri:** Dadasaheb Gaikwad Sansthan, Babasaheb Ambedkar Marg, RTO Corner, Four Bungalows, Andheri (W), Tel: 2510-1096, 2516-2505. **Ulhasnagar:** Guru Nanak High School, Kurla Camp, Ulhasnagar-4. Tel: (0251) 252-2693. **Mulund:** Mulund College of Commerce, Sarojini Road, Near Mulund Court, Mulund (W). Tel: 5598-3338. **JNPT Vipassana Center,** JNPT Township, Trainee Hostel Bldg, Sector 3, Sheva Taluka, Uran, Navi Mumbai, 9892387145, 9821808488, 27472554

[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.]

#### TELEVISION PROGRAMS FEATURING GOENKAJI

**Zee TV:** *Urja* featuring Goenkaji every Friday at 12:30 pm. in which Goenkaji answers questions about different aspects of Dhamma. **Aastha TV:** discourse by Goenkaji daily at 10 am. **In the US:** Aastha Broadcasting Network will be broadcasting Goenkaji's discourses in English at 6 pm EST (Monday to Friday) on the WORLDDIRECT platform of DIRECTV on channel no. 2005.

## CHANGE IN RESPONSIBILITIES

### Ācaryas:

1. & 2. Mr. Don & Mrs. Sally McDonald, *Australia—Worldwide Course Statistics and to serve Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore*
3. Ven. Bhikkhuni Ming Chia Shih, *Taiwan*  
*To serve Hong Kong and Taiwan including Dhammodaya*

### NEW RESPONSIBILITIES

### Ācaryas:

1. & 2. Dr. Shwe Tun Kyaw & Dr. (Mrs.) Sann Sann Wynn, *UK*  
*To spread Vipassana among expatriate Myanmar*
3. Mr. George Hsiao, *Taiwan—To serve Korea and to assist the area teacher in serving People's Republic of China*

### Senior Assistant Teachers:

1. Mr. Parsu Ram Gotama, *Myanmar*  
*To serve Dhamma Makuta and Dhamma Ratana*
2. U Tin Maung Shwe, *Myanmar*  
*To serve Dhamma Mandala and Dhamma Mandapa*
3. Daw Win Kyi, *Myanmar*  
*To serve Dhamma Mandala and Dhamma Mandapa*
4. & 5. U Kyaw Khin & Dr. Daw Mya Mya, *Myanmar*  
*To organize AT meetings and workshops for trustees and Dhamma workers*
6. Daw Sein Sein, *Myanmar—To organize AT meetings and workshops for trustees and Dhamma workers*
7. & 8. U Thaug Pe & Daw Myint Myint Tin, *Myanmar*  
*To serve Dhamma Joti*

9. Daw Saw Mya Yee, *Myanmar—To serve Dhamma Joti*
10. Mr. Dirk Taveirne & Mrs. Mieke De Wilde, *Belgium*  
*To assist the Regional Teachers in serving Dhamma Pajjota*
11. Ms. Pushpa Gala, *Hyderabad*
12. Mr. Vishram Halai, *Bhuj*
13. Dr. (Ms.) Shantuben Patel, *Bhuj*
14. Ms. Jayaben Gada, *Kutch*
15. Ms. Neeta Shah, *Bangalore*
16. Ms. Kazuko Kitamura, *Japan*
17. Ms. Eilona Ariel, *Israel*
18. Mr. Martin Haig, *Australia*
19. Ms. Marie De Roy, *Canada*
20. Mr. Sau Thach, *USA*
21. Ms. Julie Schaeffer, *USA*
22. & 23. Mr. Craig & Mrs. Jeanine Rublee, *USA*
24. & 25. Mr. Julian & Mrs. Marie Cohen, *USA*
26. & 27. Mr. Norm & Mrs. Debra Kosky, *USA*
28. & 29. Mr. Peter & Mrs. Teri Kerr, *USA*

### NEW APPOINTMENTS

### Assistant Teachers:

1. Dr. Shankarrao Deore, *Dhule*
2. Mr. Mulpuri Vishnu Vardhana Rao, *Vijaywada*
3. Ms. Subarna Kumari Bajracharya, *Nepal*
4. U Thein Aung, *Myanmar*
5. Mrs. Harbhajan Leal, *UK*
6. Ms. Virginia Lai-Chun Tang, *USA*
7. & 8. Mr. Charles Brunner & Mrs. Lynne Donaldson, *USA*

### Children Course Teachers:

1. Mr. Jitendra Mule, *Pune*
2. Mrs. Sunanada Rathi, *Pune*
3. Mr. Pradnyavant Khobragade, *Amravati*
4. Mr. Madan Mohan Malviya, *Burhanpur*
5. Mr. Omkar Moure, *Nepanagar, Khandwa*
6. & 7. Mr. Dilip Kumar & Mrs. Madhubala Meena, *Banswara*
8. Mrs. Rajni Bharadwaj, *Jaipur*
9. Mr. Suraj Narain Khunteta, *Jaipur*
10. Mr. Satya Pal Sharma, *Jaipur*
11. Ms. Kim Heacock, *USA*
12. Ms. Deborah Ann Davis, *USA*

## DHAMMA DOHAS

*Śīla-dharama pālana bhalā, niramala bhalī samādhi.  
Prajñā to jāgrata bhalī, dūra kare bhava vyādhi.*

Good to practice morality, good is right concentration;  
Good is the awakening of insight, to cure the ills of life.

*Śīla hamāre puṣṭa hoṇ, hove citta aḍola;  
Prajñā jāge bīndhatī, deya granthiyān khola.*

May we be strong in moral conduct,  
may our minds be unwavering;  
May penetrating insight arise to untie our bonds.

*With much metta,*

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*Prajñā śīla samādhi kī, babe triveṇī dhāra.  
Ḍubakī māre so tire, ho bhava sāgara pāra.*

Morality, concentration, and wisdom—three streams converge.  
Plunging into their confluence, cross the ocean of suffering.

*Gaṅgā Jamunā Sarasvatī, śīla samādhi gyāna.  
Tīnoṇ kā saṅgama hove, pragate pada niravāṇa.*

The true Ganges, Jamuna and Saraswati  
are morality, concentration and wisdom;  
Where the three converge, *nibbāna* manifests.

*With much metta,*

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