

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

*Gāraṇo ca nivāto ca,
santutṭhi ca kataññutā;
kālena dhammassavanam,
etaṃ maṅgalamuttamam.*

Respectfulness, humility,
Contentment, gratitude,
Listening to the Dhamma at the proper time—
This is the highest blessing.

—*Khuddaka pāṭha 5.9, Maṅgala Sutta*

GOENKAJI AT THE BIRTHPLACE OF THE BUDDHA

Goenkaji and Mataji had last visited Nepal in the summer of 2001. Since then, meditators from Nepal had been repeatedly inviting Goenkaji and Mataji to visit Nepal. So they decided to visit the Nepal Vipassana Centre, *Dharmaṣṛīṅga* in May this year.

Goenkaji and Mataji left Mumbai for Nepal on 9 May. It was a sudden transition from the heat of Mumbai to the cold climes of the Himalayas. Visitors started pouring in at the centre soon after Goenkaji's arrival. At noontime he would meet visitors and devote evenings to paperwork and writing.

On 15 May, His Majesty King Gyanendra came to meet Goenkaji at the Nepal Vipassana Centre. They met for almost an hour. Afterwards, the King was shown round the centre.

Many other visitors, mostly meditators, also came to the centre. They had many questions about their own meditation practice and about the theoretical aspect of Dhamma. Goenkaji answered all their questions. They were also naturally concerned about the situation in Nepal. They expressed hope that peace would be restored soon in Nepal. Goenkaji advised all to make sure that they take care of their own mental well-being, "The Dhamma is for one and all—belonging to all communities, all races, to those having different philosophical beliefs or different socio-political views. The pure Dhamma always brings people together. Let each one work for peace within and peace outside."

He also emphasized that those actively involved in the spread of Dhamma should keep away from political activity.

Goenkaji had not been able to meet the students of the ten-day course being held at the centre during his visit. However, it turned out to be a very special course for the participants as Goenkaji himself taught

mettā-bhāvana to them on the tenth day of the course.

Many visitors wanted Goenkaji's message of harmony to go to more and more people and hence wanted him to give a public talk in the town of Kathmandu. It would have been very difficult for him to make the trip to the city and back because of his age and health. Therefore, it was decided to arrange a talk in the Vipassana centre itself on the morning of 21 May. The hilly terrain of the centre didn't have enough flat land to seat all the visitors in one place. There was a big crowd that occupied every available place including stairs, terraces and balconies of the buildings in the centre to hear Goenkaji who spoke on "Vipassana and Mental Peace." The talk was broadcast live on Image TV channel.

Goenkaji said that Nepal is very fortunate that the historic Buddha was born in Nepal. Two earlier Buddhas were also born here. The country has been blessed with the ancient heritage of the Buddha's teaching. A Buddha always teaches universal Dhamma—the Law applicable to one and all. If the Buddha's original teaching spreads again in Nepal, it will help in creating a peaceful atmosphere in the country.

Many meditators from the town were keen to meditate in the presence of Goenkaji, so a one-day course was arranged on the occasion of Buddha Jayanti (the full moon day, on which the Buddha was born, attained enlightenment and passed away). The office had to stop registration for the course due to the overwhelming response. More than a thousand meditators turned up for the one-day course. Most had travelled for an hour to come to the centre around 7:30 am. The one-day course started at 8:00 am. Every hall and empty room and all meditation cells were occupied. The hard-working Dhamma servers and

efficient management ensured that all were seated properly and that the various temporary dining halls functioned smoothly. Goenkaji led the *mettā* session at 4.30 pm for which the meditators came out in the open and were seated at various available places from where they could see and hear Goenkaji.

Goenkaji expressed his joy at seeing such a huge gathering of Vipassana meditators meditating very seriously in Noble Silence. He said:

The arising of the Buddhas is great happiness—

sukho buddhānam uppādo.

Happy is the teaching of pure Dhamma—

sukhā saddhammadesanā.

Happy is the coming together of meditators—

sukhā saṅghassa sāmaggī, and

Happy it is to meditate together—

samaggānam tapo sukho. (Dhammapada 194)

Goenkaji narrated incidents from the life of the Buddha where he taught the proper way to pay respect. Once when his aunt Mahāpajāpati Gotami, who had nursed the young Siddhartha after the death of his mother, came to pay respect to the Buddha, he pointed to the monks meditating nearby and said that this was the proper way to pay respect to the Buddha.

Again before his *mahāparinibbāna*, he pointed to two monks who were meditating ardently and said that they were paying respect to him in the true sense.

On 24 May, Goenkaji met the Vipassana teachers and assistant teachers as well as the trustees. He said that the managing committees of the centres are actually *seva samitis*—service committees and that he would like to refer to them as such. He again emphasized that every Dhamma worker at a centre shares the merits of the greatest of all gifts—the gift of the Dhamma.

To a question about what Vipassana could do for various maladies in the society, Goenkaji replied that other than directly benefiting those who learn and practise it, Vipassana gives strength to those involved in serving society in various ways including those serving in various organizations that work for worthy social causes.

While answering questions from assistant teachers, he emphasized the importance of *pariyatti* for their own development on the path of Dhamma and in the discharge of their duties but said that since this is a *paṭipatti* tradition, he would like them to focus on the spread of *paṭipatti*. *Pariyatti* is important but it is only *paṭipatti* that gives real fruits of Dhamma. He also met the trustees and Dhamma workers from other Vipassana centres in Nepal.

The next day was an auspicious day for the centre as more than 180 monks and nuns, most of them Vipassana meditators, were invited to the centre for Sanghadāna. After the meal, they were all invited to a tent where Goenkaji, Mataji and the meditators

offered them requisites. The atmosphere was one of extreme joy at being able to offer Sanghadāna. A person who leaves home and takes robes to dedicate his or her entire life to the Dhamma is worthy of respect and offerings. A Vipassana meditator feels gratitude for the Sangha because it preserved the theory and practice of Dhamma through the millennia.

The Sanghadāna was meticulously planned and very well organized. Meditators had registered ahead of time to take part in the offerings. The careful planning wherein each meditator was allotted an item of the offering to give to a specific member of the Sangha allowed more than 700 meditators to give offerings with their own hands. After the offerings, the Sangha chanted *puññanumodana* (sharing the joy of the donor and giving blessings for progress on the path of Dhamma).

The next day meditators and Dhamma servers again arrived at the centre before Goenkaji's departure. After meeting them, Goenkaji and Mataji left for the airport. Many trustees and assistant teachers had acquired special passes to enter the restricted area at the airport and hence were able to meditate with Goenkaji while he was waiting in the lounge. After the brief meditation session, they asked a few questions in the time available before Goenkaji boarded the plane for Mumbai.

Finally, Goenkaji gave *mettā* to the sacred land of Nepal:

Yaha to dharatī dharama kī,

yaha buddhoṅ kā deśa;

śuddha dharama jāge yahāñ,

kaṭe sabhī ke kleśa.

This is the land of Dhamma,

This is the land of the Buddhas;

May the pure Dhamma arise here (again),

May the mental impurities of all be eradicated.

Yaha to dharatī dharama kī,

yaha hai pāvana deśa;

śuddha dharama jāge yahāñ,

phaile deśa videśa.

This is the land of Dhamma,

This is a sacred land;

May the pure Dhamma arise here (again),

May it spread to many lands.

GOENKAJI'S DISCOURSES ON TELEVISION

India: A new series of Hindi discourses by Goenkaji is being telecast daily at 10 am on Aastha TV channel.

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

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Question: It is found that many Vipassana meditators are not able to meditate regularly at home. How can this be prevented?

Goenkaji: This is because every individual has both good qualities as well as bad qualities. People come to Vipassana courses to strengthen their good qualities and to eradicate the bad ones. They get helped by Vipassana in one or two courses.

But they have such a big stock of bad qualities. These start overpowering them. When these impurities start overpowering a student, one understands fully well at the intellectual level that one should practise Vipassana to come out of misery. Yet because one is overpowered by one's own impurities, it becomes difficult. This is quite natural—we see this everywhere.

This will continue to some extent. People will progress slowly—they may take two steps and then fall down and get up again; then again take two steps and again fall down. Later, they will reach the stage where they are so strong that they can't fall down. It takes time.

As for the practical solution to the present problem: even if a student stops meditating every morning and evening, if they still come to a weekly group sitting, their batteries will get charged and they will start working again. So this weekly sitting is very beneficial in helping to solve this problem.

In every town, every village, every neighbourhood, there should be at least one person who can give time to remind people: "Tomorrow there is a weekly joint sitting." This will help people. Many of them do not come merely out of laziness. It is not that they are very busy or that something stops them from coming. If you simply encourage them, they will come.

Another thing we have found helpful is these one-day courses with Anapana, Vipassana, *mettā*, and a short discourse. The students get refreshed by such courses, their batteries get charged. This should be encouraged. It will be helpful.

Question: Our residence is in the midst of a crowded city which makes it difficult to meditate. Is there any way to keep such outside disturbances out of our meditation?

Goenkaji: (laughs) As I said, either you change your residence—run away from the noise of the city—or you become so powerful that you can stop all noises around you. Neither is possible. You have to live in society in the same circumstances where you have been living. You have to strengthen yourself and learn how to ignore all these disturbances. In the same way that a lotus living in water is not affected by the water, you can ignore all these disturbances.

For example, right now we are talking, and a bird is chirping outside. This bird does not disturb us—we are busy with our discussion. In the same way, we may be busy with our meditation. Let any noise be there; we continue our meditation. One has to train oneself. One

has to live in the world full of disturbances, and in spite of this, maintain peace and harmony within. Going for weekly group sittings and one-day courses will also help to strengthen your daily meditation.

Question: Some students still do not understand the significance of *dāna*. When courses are given freely, they tend to think, "Well, the services are free, why give *dāna*?" We seek your guidance on this problem.

Goenkaji: There are two extremes. One extreme is that you charge for the food, lodging, etc., and you tell everybody, "These are the expenses for our service to you, so you must give us this much. Otherwise how can we run this organization?" This is prohibited. This is one extreme.

Now, another extreme is that you boast, "We don't take anything from you." Then people would think that perhaps a big foundation is behind the organization, or perhaps some government secret service is giving money for its own purpose, so why should they give *dāna*?

Between these two extremes, there should be a middle path. No charges should be made—this point should be very clear. But at the same time, the organization runs only on the *dāna* of the students. Those who benefit and feel that this ball should keep rolling for the good of others will automatically give a donation. Only when they give will this work continue. This point should be made very clear to the students, without pressing them for *dāna*.

There are cases, especially in this country, where people are so poor that every day they are living hand to mouth. They live solely by their meager daily earnings. If such people come to a course for ten days, they lose their daily wages; that in itself is a big sacrifice. If such a person gives even one rupee, it is very good, because this is a great *pāramī*, much greater than when a millionaire gives a thousand, or even one lakh rupees.

Leave it this way. But make this point very clear: our organizations are run only on the free-will donations of the students. There is no other source of income. §

(From "For the Benefit of Many" published by VRI)

NEW VIPASSANA CENTRE IN ARGENTINA

The Vipassana Argentina Trust has just purchased land for a Vipassana Center in Argentina. The sales contract has been signed and the land has been paid for in full. Goenkaji has named the centre *Dhamma Sukhadā* (Giving Happiness of Dhamma).

The 23-hectare rectangular piece of land is located in the province of Buenos Aires approximately 85 kilometres (one hour) from the center of the city of Buenos Aires (the largest city in Argentina and the capital of the country). The small town close to the property is Brandsen.

The property is ideal for a meditation center. The entire plot of land is flat, located in the quiet countryside and has good road access. The trees in the middle are eucalyptus trees surrounding a water mill. There is plenty of water on the land and throughout the area. The trust will start construction as soon as there are sufficient funds. For more information, contact: info@ar.dhamma.org

CHILDREN'S COURSES IN MUMBAI

Date	Venue	Age	Registration
10 July	Ulhasnagar	10-12 years	7 and 8 July
10 July	Andheri	13-16 years	7 and 8 July
17 July	Mulund	10-12 years	14 and 15 July
17 July	JNPT	13-16 years	14 and 15 July
24 July	Matunga	10-12 years	21 and 22 July

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 Tel: 98923-87145, 98218-08488, 2747-2554. **Khadavli:** *Dhamma Saritā* : Jivan Sandhya Mangal Sansthan, near Khadavli station -Tel: 25101096, 25162505. **South Mumbai:** for registration, call 23081622
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. (Those wishing to serve in children's courses in Mumbai area may call 98200-22990.)

VIPASSANA NEWSLETTER ON THE WEBSITE

Current and past issues of the Hindi Vipassana Patrika and English Newsletter can be downloaded from the VRI website:
<http://www.vri.dhamma.org/NewslettersHindi/index.html>
<http://www.vri.dhamma.org/newsletters/index.html>
Telugu Vipassana Newsletter: Published every month. Annual subscription: Rs. 50/-. Subscriptions may be sent to *Dhamma Khetta*, VIMC, Kusum Nagar, (12.6 km) Nagarjuna Sagar Road, Hyderabad-500 070

ONLINE APPLICATION FOR DHAMMA GIRI COURSES
Applications for ten-day courses at *Dhamma Giri* can now be made through the Internet. Applicants may fill the online form at: www.dhamma.org/schvia.shtml

NEW APPOINTMENTS

Assistant Teachers:

Mr. G. Raghurama Kumar, *Hyderabad*

Children Course Teachers:

Ms. Lucie Petit, *Canada*

IN MEMORIAM

Dr. (Mrs.) Sneh Jindal, Senior Assistant Teacher, passed away on 6 June 2005. She served the Dhamma selflessly and lived an exemplary life full of Dhamma. May she be happy, peaceful and liberated!

DHAMMA DOHAS

*Dharama hamārā īśāvāra, Dharama hamārā nātha.
Sadā surakṣita hī rabeṇ, Dharama hamāre sātha.*

Dhamma is our master, Dhamma is our lord.
We are always protected when Dhamma is with us.

*Dharama hamārā bandhu bai, sakhā sabāyaka mīta.
Caleṇ Dharama kī rīta hī, rahe Dharama se prīta.*

Dhamma is our kin, companion, helpmate, friend.
Let us walk on the path of Dhamma,
Let us cherish Dhamma.

*With much metta,
A Vipassana meditator*

*Yabī Dharama kā niyama bai, yabī Dharama kī rīta.
Jo dhāre niramala bane, pāvāna bane punīta.*

This is the law of Dhamma, this is the way of Dhamma:
Whoever applies it becomes pure, holy and saintly.

*Dharma dhāra niramala bane, rājā ho yā raṅka.
Roga śoka cintā mīte, nirabhaya bane niśaṅka.*

Practice the Dhamma and become pure, whether prince or pauper.
Sickness, sorrow and worry vanish; no more fear or doubt.

*With best compliments from
MOTILAL BANARSIDASS*

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