

# Vipassana Newsletter

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

Vol. 15, No. 7: 21 July 2005  
Published every month

Vipassana Research Institute  
Dhamma Giri, Igatpuri-422 403, Maharashtra

## WORDS OF DHAMMA

*Khantī ca sovacassatā,  
Samañānañca dassanaṃ;  
Kālena dhammasākacchā,  
Etaṃ maṅgalamuttamaṃ.*

Forbearance, accepting guidance,  
Beholding saintly people,  
Discussion of the Dhamma at the proper time—  
This is the highest blessing.

—*Khuddaka pāṭha 5.10, Maṅgala Sutta*

## WAS THE BUDDHA A PESSIMIST?

S. N. Goenka

*(The following is an extract from “Was the Buddha a Pessimist?” published by VRI. It is the translation and adaptation of the VRI Hindi publication “Kyā Buddha Dukkhavādī The?” by S. N. Goenka.)*

I remember that during my youth, a missionary had come from India to Mandalay. In one of his discourses, he said, “The Buddha only taught four things—suffering, the cause of suffering, the eradication of suffering and the path of the eradication of suffering. All he is talking about is suffering! There is no happiness anywhere. There is not a trace of happiness in the Buddha’s teaching. He is a pessimist! The Buddha taught nothing but pessimism. To use the word “Noble” (*ārya*) for this teaching is wrong. How can suffering be noble? Truth, bliss and absorption are called *ārya*. In the Buddha’s teaching none of these are present!”

This missionary was a powerful speaker. Being only a teenager I was quite immature, and his speech impressed me. I found his point quite logical: “The Buddha’s teaching is full of suffering and totally devoid of happiness.”

Years later when I realised for myself the true meaning of the four Noble Truths, I became ashamed of my lack of wisdom in my teenage years. While these four Noble Truths of life were expounded in systematic detail by the Buddha, only Vipassana helped me to understand them.

Suffering is one truth of life. It arises because of craving and aversion, which in turn arise from *taṇhā* (*trṣṇā*). If these causes are eradicated, then the root cause of suffering is eradicated. For this, there is a practical technique, a path, a way: an Eightfold Path,

which teaches one, while living a moral and upright life, to master one’s mind and to develop *paññā* (experiential wisdom).

If one practises *paññā* (*prajñā*), then new impurities do not arise in the mind and the old stock of impurities is automatically eradicated. After all, what is the eradication of suffering? It is a direct result of purifying the mind, the experience of *nibbāna* (*nirvāṇa*). Suffering, its cause, its eradication and the path of its eradication are called Noble Truths. The final aim of the teaching of the Buddha is to eradicate all suffering.

The Noble Truth of the eradication of suffering is explained in four aspects:

1. *Nissaraṇattha*: To come out of all the accumulated impurities (defilements)
2. *Vivekattha*: To be free from the habit of developing new impurities
3. *Asañkhatattha*: To experience for oneself the unborn state where nothing arises
4. *Amatattha*: To experience for oneself the deathless state where nothing passes away.

It became clear to me through the practice of Vipassana that misery arises the moment the mind is defiled with craving or aversion. And misery passes away when the defilements are removed. As many defilements are removed, that much misery is eliminated. If all the past-accumulated impurities are eradicated and the habit of making new impurities is broken, then misery is totally eradicated—*dukkha-nirodha*.

In today’s India, *nirodha* is used to denote “suppression”. However, when something is suppressed, it may again raise its head at any time in

the future. In contrast, the original meaning of *nirodha* is “complete uprooting, total eradication”. That which cannot arise again is *nirodha*. Therefore *dukkha-nirodha* means that *dukkha* (suffering) cannot arise again.

This was explained using the example of a palm tree. When a palm tree’s top is cut off, the tree does not get new leaves; it dies. Similarly, the path of total eradication of misery is taught in the fourth Noble Truth. Misery cannot arise again. This was called—

*Pahīno, ucchinnamūlo, tālavattbukato, anabhāvaṅkato, āyatim anuppādadhammo*—destroyed, uprooted, like a palm tree whose head is cut off, extinguished, attaining the state of non-arising.

Similarly, today *ārya* merely denotes a caste or race. However, in the days of the Buddha, *ārya* denoted not simply caste or race but, rather, qualities. If a person of any race, caste or class—walking on the path of the Dhamma (Universal Law) by the development of morality, mastery over the mind and experiential wisdom—attained the first of the four stages of liberation, he was called an *Ārya* (a Noble One).

This stage is called *sotāpanna* (stream-enterer)—that is, this person has entered the stream of complete liberation from the cycle of birth and death. Such a person is partially liberated. One is totally freed from the possibility of future lives in the lower worlds because of eradication of all *kammās* (*karmās*) that would take one to such lower worlds even though one still has some *kammās* left, which may result in a maximum of seven lives before final liberation from all rebirth. Hence, such a person is entitled to the epithet of *ārya*.

Continuing the practice of Vipassana, the practitioner successively becomes a *sakadāgāmi* (once-returned), *anāgāmi* (non-returned) and finally attains the state of an *arabat* (fully liberated being). Thus, *ārya-satya* (Noble Truth) is a truth through the experience of which anyone can become an *ārya*—noble person.

### Linguistic Derivations

The language of the Vedas was called *Chāndas* at the time of the Buddha. About two centuries after the Buddha, an erudite grammarian by the name of Pāṇini wrote a new grammar and thus created a new language based on the existing language, but quite different from it. It was governed by new rules. The language that was created was called Sanskrit (literally: composed, created, fashioned or artificial).

*Ārya* was used in the Vedic literature at the time of the Buddha in the qualitative sense, as well as to denote caste. In the literature of Pāṇini’s Sanskrit also, both meanings were applied to *ārya*. Later on a new meaning was added: the people of the three

classes (namely, Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas) were called *ārya*.

The Buddha gave his discourses in his mother tongue, which was Kosali. This was the spoken language of the kingdom of Kosala and it was the natural language spoken by the people. It was not an artificially created language like Sanskrit. This Prakrit (literally, ‘natural’) language protected the words of the Buddha for centuries, therefore it was called Pali (‘that which protects’).

Years after the Buddha, the entire region of northern India along with the state of Kosala came under the rule of the Magadha Emperor Ashoka, who adopted not only the teaching of the Buddha but also his language. Then the language started to be called Magadhi. In this language, *ārya* is *ariya*, an epithet for all those who have attained stages from *sotāpanna* to *arabat*.

In the Buddha’s teaching in the vast Pali literature, *ariya* (*ārya*) never once denoted caste or race. It always referred to qualities. For example:

*Visuddho uttamoti ariyo*—one who is pure and supreme is an *ārya*.

*Ariyoti kilesehi ārakā thito parisuddho*—one who is far away from the stains of passion, and thus, supremely pure, is an *ārya*.

*Anaye na iriyatīti ariyo*—one who does not follow the unwholesome way is an *ārya*.

*Abhimsā sabbapāṇānaṃ ariyotīti pavuccati*—One who is non-violent towards all beings is an *ārya*.

*Ariyaphalapatilābhato ariyoti*—One who has attained *nibbāna* is an *ārya*.

In contrast, those who are far away from the fruit of *ārya* (*nibbāna*) are called *puthujjana*. It is said—

*Hīno gammo puthujaniko anariyo anattasambhito*—a non-*ārya* (*anariya*) is one who is base, uninitiated (rustic), far away from *nibbāna* and collects unwholesome states.

*Ariyoti putthujanabhūmi atikkanto*—an *ārya* is one who has crossed the field of *putthujjana* (an ordinary worldly person).

The Noble Truths (*ariyasaccāni*) are similarly defined:

*Ariyā imāni paṭivijjhanti tasmā ariyasaccānīti vuccantīti*—those truths that are known to the *ārya* are *ārya* truths (Noble Truths).

### Ultimate Truth

Siddhattha Gotama (Siddhārtha Gautama) attained the ultimate self-enlightenment in Bodh Gaya and became a perfectly Self-enlightened One.

Later, he taught the Dhamma to the five Brahmin ascetics from Kapilavatthu in Varanasi. In his first discourse he expounded the practical aspect of the four Noble Truths. There he explained how the four Noble Truths lead to the ultimate reality of *nibbāna*, which is beyond the senses: eternal, everlasting and

## CHILDREN'S COURSES IN MUMBAI

permanent. He clarified how the four Noble Truths if practised in all three aspects (in the complete twelve-fold manner) can lead to the experience of the ultimate reality.

According to the Buddha's teaching, all four Noble Truths are also included in any one Noble Truth. Anyone who goes beyond misery does so by understanding the entire field of misery. Thus, the Noble Truth of suffering includes the other three.

Within a week, all the five Brahmin ascetics attained complete liberation by practising this benevolent teaching. Thus, they became the first five *arahats* after the Buddha. Vipassana proved fruitful!

From then on the Buddha wandered from the eastern border of Rajasthan to the western border of Bengal, ceaselessly serving people. He taught how to realize these Noble Truths through the practice of Vipassana, resulting in the experience of the eternal truth of *nibbāna*. Even in his lifetime, thousands of monks and nuns (*bhikkhus* and *bhikkhunis*) became *arahats*.

In addition, hundreds of thousands of both *bhikkhus* and householders had the first experience of the ultimate reality when they became *sotāpanna* (stream-enterer). Later, many became *sakadāgāmi* and *anāgāmi*. This technique of Vipassana benefited millions of people by liberating them from suffering in this very life through the realization of the four Noble Truths.

It was our misfortune that we lost this wonderful technique and all its literature from our country and as a result were deprived of its limitless benefit. Both the practice and the literature disappeared. With the teaching no longer available, people began to criticise it out of ignorance, declaring that they did not accept the noble truth of suffering. In the face of such an unfortunate historical development, how can one blame the Buddha or the Vipassana that he taught, for the currently accepted misconceptions about his teachings? ☹

### GOENKAJI'S DISCOURSES ON TELEVISION

**India:** A new series of Hindi discourses by Goenkaji is being telecast daily at 9:45 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 at 4:30 am (Indian Standard Time)

### VALUE BASED EDUCATION WORKSHOP

38 schoolteachers participated in the *Values Inculcation Through Vipassana* workshop from 12 May to 26 May 2005 at *Dhamma Punna*, Pune Vipassana centre. Of these, 16 were old students. Soon after the workshop, a participant arranged a talk for 70 teachers from all over the country at Kendriya Vidyalaya, BEG, Pune during their update camp.

**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:** JNPT Vipassana Center, 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:** Times of India Bldg., Opp. CST Station, Tel 23081622. **Ghatkopar:** SNTD School, New Building, Cama Lane, Ghatkopar West, Opp. Vidyut Society, Mumbai 400086, Tel: 25101096, 25162505.

Date	Venue	Age	Registration
10 July	Ulhasnagar	10-12 years	7 & 8 July
10 July	Andheri	13-16 years	7 & 8 July
17 July	Mulund	10-12 years	14 & 15 July
17 July	JNPT	13-16 years	14 & 15 July
24 July	Matunga	10-12 years	21 & 22 July
24 July	Ghatkopar	13-16 years	21 & 22 July
7 Aug	South Mumbai	10-12 years	4 & 5 Aug
14 Aug	Andheri	10-12 years	11 & 12 Aug
14 Aug	Ulhasnagar	13-16 years	11 & 12 Aug
21 Aug	Ghatkopar	13-16 years	18 & 19 Aug
21 Aug	JNPT	10-12 years	18 & 19 Aug
4 Sept	South Mumbai	13-16 years	1 & 2 Sept
4 Sept	Matunga	13-16 years	1st & 2nd Sept
11 Sept	Andheri	13-16 years	8 & 9 Sept
11 Sept	Ulhasnagar	10-12 years	8 & 9 Sept
18 Sept	Ghatkopar	10-12 years	15 & 16 Sept
18 Sept	Mulund	13-16 years	15 & 16 Sept

**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.)

## VIPASSANA COURSE IN BAHRAIN

The first Vipassana meditation course was conducted in Bahrain from 2 June to 13 June 2005, though a course had been conducted about 8 years ago at Hawar island, an hour's journey by boat from Bahrain.

13 participants, 5 males and 8 females, attended the course. They were of Indian, Sri Lankan, German, English, Malaysian and Bahraini nationality. All the students worked seriously during the course.

The four Dhamma workers serving this course were from four different nationalities and religions: a Bahraini Muslim, a Sri Lankan Buddhist, an Indian Hindu and a Malaysian Christian!

The venue of the course was Bahrain Wellness Resort, a recently constructed resort with good facilities and very peaceful atmosphere with many trees; the only sound is the chirping of birds. Only vegetarian food is served here and no liquor is allowed.

At the end of the course, the administration of Bahrain Wellness Resort expressed a keen desire to introduce Vipassana to their entire staff and wanted to have books related to Vipassana to be kept in their library.

## 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

## MANAGER REQUIRED AT VIPASSANA CENTRES

Vipassana meditators who have completed a Satipatthana course, have good knowledge of Hindi and English and are less than 60 years may apply at the following Vipassana centres. They will be provided with meals and accommodation as well as suitable honorarium, if necessary.

**Dhamma Bodhi, Bodhgaya, (Bihar).** Contact: Bodh Gaya Meditation Centre, Gaya-Dobhi Road (15 km), Post: Magadha University, Bodhgaya-824234. Tel: (0631) 220-0437.

**Dhamma Swatthi, Sravasti (U.P.).** Contact: Jetavana Vipassana Meditation Centre, Katara bypass, Sravasti 271845. Email: dhammasravasti@yahoo.com Tel: (05252) 265-439. Mobile: 94150-07733, 94150-28084.

**Dhamma Cakka, Sarnath (U.P.).** Contact: 1) Pramod Chandra Gupta, Chaudhary Chambers, D53/97-A, Rathyatra, Gurubagh Road, Varanasi-221010. Mobile: 93369-14834, 94152-02135. 2) Satya Prakash, Fax: (0542) 220-2285, Mobile: 99355-58100, 94152-26862; Email: kambalghar@sancharnet.in

## IN MEMORIAM

Mr. Jaikumar Tibrewala from Nashik, Senior Assistant Teacher of Vipassana and Trustee of the Global Pagoda Foundation, passed away at his residence on the morning of 2 July 2005 due to stroke (cerebrovascular accident).

He served the Dhamma selflessly and lived an exemplary life full of Dhamma. May he be happy, peaceful and liberated!

## NEW APPOINTMENTS

### Assistant Teachers:

1. Mr. Dahanaka Ralage Rathnasiri, *Sri Lanka*
2. Mrs. Amitha Siriwardene, *Sri Lanka*
3. Mr. Fu-Hsin Yu, *Taiwan* 4. Mr. Tien Jiun Hong, *Taiwan*
5. Ms. Clara Jiménez, *Spain*

### Children Course Teachers:

1. Mr. Khetabhai Solanki, *Palanpur* 2. & 3. Mr. Jason & Mrs. Chiam, Kian Ber, *Singapore* 4. Ms. Tan, Tan Hoy, *Malaysia*
5. Ms. Tan, Geok Pooi, *Malaysia* 6. Mr. Yeo, Chin Hock, *Malaysia* 7. Mr. Khoo, Hong Eng, *Malaysia*

## 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](http://www.dhamma.org/schvia.shtml)

## DHAMMA DOHAS

*Vānī to vaśa meṇ bhalī, vaśa meṇ bhalā śarīra;  
Para jo mana vaśa meṇ kare, vahī sūra vaha vīra.*

Good to have mastery of speech,  
good to have physical mastery,  
but one who is master of his mind  
is a warrior of real courage.

*Mana hī durajana, mana sujana, mana bairī, mana mīta;  
Mana sudhare saba sudhari hairī, kara mana parama punīta.*

The mind can be wicked, the mind can be gentle,  
the mind can be a foe or friend.

If the mind is transformed, all is transformed,  
so make your mind truly pure.

*With much metta,*

**A Vipassana meditator**

*Dharma na mandira meṇ mile, Dharma na hāta bikāya;  
Dharma na granthoṇ meṇ mile, jo dhāre so pāya.*

Dhamma is not found in temples, or sold in the bazaar.  
Dhamma is not found in books; whoever applies it attains it.

*Apanā rakṣita Dharama hī, apanā rakṣaka hoyā;  
Dhāraṇa kara leṇ Dharama ko, Dharama sahāyaka hoyā.*

Only if you guard the Dhamma, it will be your guard.  
If you practice Dhamma, the Dhamma is your helper.

*With best compliments from*

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LIFE SUBSCRIPTION: RS 500 (U.S. \$100 OUTSIDE INDIA) BY BANK DRAFT, PAYABLE AT IGATPURI IN FAVOUR OF VRI.

Edited and published by R. P. Yadav for VRI, Igatpuri 422 403 and printed at Akshar Chitra Press, 69B-Road, Satpur, Nashik 422 007.

21 July 2005

Posted at Igatpuri, Dist. Nashik

Posting Day: *Purnima* of every month

POSTAL CLAUSE NO. 232 REG. NO. 49916/90  
LICENSED TO POST WITHOUT PREPAYMENT OF POSTAGE - LICENCE NUMBER - AR/NSK/WP-13  
POSTAL REG. NO. AR/NSK 39/2003-2005

PRINTED MATTER

If undelivered, please return to:

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Dist. Nashik, Maharashtra, India.

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