

Vipassana Newsletter

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

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

WORDS OF DHAMMA

*sukho buddhānamuppādo,
sukhā saddhammadesanā;
sukhā saṅghassa sāmaggī,
samaggānaṃ tapo sukho.*

Happy is the arising of the Buddhas.
Happy is the teaching of the sublime Dhamma.
Happy is the unity of the Sangha.
Happy is the practice of the united ones.

—Dhammapada 194

Goenkaji's Visit to Delhi—December 29, 2003 to January 10, 2004

Day One—December 29, 2003

Delhi, the capital city of India, and the neighbouring areas have gone from strength to strength in the spread of Dhamma over the last decade. Goenkaji had planned to visit Delhi last year but he had to cancel it due to other engagements.

This time, he was determined to visit Delhi. He left Mumbai at noon. The dense winter fog threatened to delay his flight but eventually his plane landed in Delhi only half an hour late. Later in the evening, he met the teachers and the main organizers to discuss the programme during his stay.

Day Two—December 30, 2003

Goenkaji visited the newly constructed Vipassana centre, *Dhamma Paṭṭhāna*, in the morning. *Dhamma Paṭṭhāna* is located near Kammaspur village in the Sonapat district of Haryana. Many archaeological researchers associate this village with the historical *Kammāsadamma nigama*, where the Buddha taught Satipaṭṭhāna to the Kurus. A dedicated team of meditators purchased land adjoining the canal near the agricultural village of Kammaspur. Construction began immediately to create a beautiful facility for serious meditation amidst the lush green farms in the peaceful village of Kammaspur. The centre has 59 single rooms with attached baths, two meditation halls and a beautiful pagoda-cell complex. Raised brick and cement pathways ensure that meditators won't have to walk in the mud even in the monsoon.

This centre will be used only for serious courses including Satipaṭṭhāna sutta course, special ten-day course and long courses. It is, thus, one of the five centres in India that are authorized by Goenkaji to host long courses.

Students from the recently concluded thirty-day course stayed on to avail themselves of the opportunity

to meet their principal Teacher. Goenkaji meditated in the central cell of the pagoda. About four hundred meditators had occupied the other cells, the two Dhamma halls and even the registration office to take advantage of this rare opportunity of meditating with their teacher on this winter morning in this historic place.

Goenkaji then went to the larger meditation hall where all the meditators assembled after the meditation session. He gave a brief talk about the importance of Kammasapur known in ancient times as *Kammāsadamma* (literally 'destruction of the defilements').

Afterwards, he met a group of meditators who had come from Meerut. In the evening, he went to Sonapat to give a public talk. The talk had been arranged in the auditorium of a prominent boarding school. Over 500 people benefited from the discourse and the lively question-answer session that followed.

Day Three—December 31, 2003

In the morning Goenkaji met trustees, CCTs and ATs from Delhi. Tandonji gave a brief report on Dhamma activities in Delhi. He described the harmony among Dhamma workers in Delhi area using the quote:

*Samaggā sammōdamānā
avivadamānā khīrodakibhūtā
aññamaññaṃ piyacakkhūbi
sampassantā viharissanti*³ti.

Samyutta Nikāya 2.4.267, Pañcakaṅga

They will dwell in harmony, courteous,
without quarrelling, like milk mixed with water,
looking upon one another
with the eye of love and affection.

Goenkaji was happy to know that all the meditators and ATs in this area worked together in harmony. Indeed, the harmony and teamwork of the Dhamma workers and ATs in Delhi has provided fertile ground for the teaching of Vipassana to develop quickly and

strongly, allowing it to serve an ever-increasing number of people.

In the evening, Goenkaji gave a talk at the headquarters of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad. He explained the technique of Vipassana and then clarified some of the major misunderstandings about the Buddha in India. In particular, Goenkaji explained that it is totally wrong to say that the Buddha's teaching weakened India. The Buddha was very particular about the security of both republics and kingdoms. The emperors who followed his teaching maintained strong armies to ensure the security of their state. Emperor Ashoka set a shining example of how to ensure the security, peace and harmony of the country.

Day Four—January 1, 2004

Dhamma Sota is an extremely well-planned centre with a beautiful office complex for registration, fine residences, serene and spacious meditation hall, excellent landscaping, including broad cement pathways lined with verdant trees.

Meditators arriving on this cold winter morning were greeted warmly by Dhamma workers and offered hot tea at the gate. Goenkaji arrived at *Dhamma Sota* later in the morning. Meditators had already gathered for meditation in a marquee erected on the site where the construction of the pagoda was to begin.

Goenkaji arrived in time to end the group sitting. He led the *mettā* session and then walked around the campus practicing *mettā* and chanting *mettā* verses.

The excellent teamwork of Delhi meditators was again apparent at lunchtime when food was served to everyone in the centre even though many more meditators had turned up than expected.

In the evening, Goenkaji gave Anapana to students of the ten-day course. Since the travel time from his residence in the city to the centre was almost two hours, the visit to *Dhamma Sota* took up his entire day.

Day Five—January 2, 2004

Goenkaji gave a public talk at the Talkatora indoor stadium, one of the biggest auditoriums in the city. More than 500 old meditators meditated for an hour in the hall prior to the discourse. After the group sitting, many non-meditators attended the Dhamma talk.

Goenkaji explained how the practice of Vipassana is the key to peace and harmony within society. He gave a succinct account of what is taught in a ten-day Vipassana course and exhorted the audience to give a trial to this universal teaching of the Buddha.

There was an outpouring of questions from the audience, and even though the question-answer session continued for almost forty-five minutes, some questions from old meditators had to be deferred. A TV channel and the press covered the talk and interviewed Goenkaji later.

Day Six—January 3, 2004

Vipassana in Tihar has become one of the most successful prison reform programmes. The support and

enthusiasm of the prison staff, the dedication, commitment and hard work of Dhamma workers, and above all, the sincerity of the inmate-meditators have made *Dhamma Tihar*—the Vipassana centre within the premises of Tihar—a sanctuary of peace.

Goenkaji visited Tihar jail today to address the inmates and to visit *Dhamma Tihar*, which will soon be completing ten years of service. He told the inmates that the misery of confinement within the walls of the prison was great but the misery of bondage of one's mental defilements was much greater. He explained how Vipassana helps us come out of this suffering.

Goenkaji then visited *Dhamma Tihar* and meditated in the meditation hall with the staff and inmate-Dhamma workers. He walked around the centre and saw the facilities. There is now an additional cell complex in *Dhamma Tihar*. It has been hosting a 20-day course every year for the last four years. Goenkaji and Mataji had tea with the staff before leaving *Dhamma Tihar*.

Day Seven—January 4, 2004

This was to be a long day for Goenkaji. He left home early to meet with His Holiness, the Dalai Lama. The two masters met after a gap of years. After the meeting, he rushed to the Holistic Centre in Satbari, where he had been requested to give a talk on global peace.

Goenkaji reiterated that peace within individuals is necessary for peace within society. A peaceful society is necessary for a peaceful country and a peaceful world. One who practises Vipassana gains a universal tool to achieve inner peace. Following the talk, he answered questions from the audience.

After lunch at his residence, Goenkaji went to Logicstat Farms, where a one-day course had been organized. About 800 meditators braved the bitter cold to take part in the course. Careful planning and participation in all aspects of Dhamma work by the senior teachers created an excellent atmosphere for the course. The arrangements for lunch and tea were also excellent.

Goenkaji led the *mettā* session and then gave a short talk in which he said that a meditator must take care of two things: Regular meditation every day, morning and evening and one's behaviour throughout the day.

A meditator should keep checking whether his life is improving. Sometimes, the change is gradual but if one is meditating regularly, there are bound to be positive changes. Whenever one generates anger and animosity towards others, one should check how quickly one realizes it and how quickly one is able to practice *mettā* for that person.

A question-answer session and short meetings with groups of meditators followed the talk.

Day Eight—January 5, 2004

Goenkaji was scheduled to give a talk to principals of various schools but had to cancel it due to ill health. This was the first time in more than a decade that Goenkaji had to cancel a public talk at such short notice.

Prof. P. L. Dhar, Vipassana teacher in charge of the Value Education programme, was requested to give a talk instead of Goenkaji. His talk on 'Value Inculcation Through Self-Observation' was greatly appreciated by all.

By evening, Goenkaji had recovered enough to deliver a talk to a select gathering of educationists, officials and politicians on the lawns of the official residence of a minister in the Government of India, who is an old student of Vipassana.

Day Nine—January 6, 2004

Goenkaji met individual meditators in the morning, and later caught up with some of the pending paper work. In the evening, he received more visitors and discussed the remaining programme with his assistants. Since Goenkaji did not have to leave his residence today, he was able to rest and recuperate.

Day Ten—January 7, 2004

In the morning, Goenkaji visited the Bahai Temple. He saw various facilities provided there for visitors. Later, he met some meditators who sought personal guidance from him. In the evening, he went to the residence of the Venezuelan Ambassador to give a talk on Vipassana. Ambassadors of other Latin American countries were also present. They were interested in knowing more about Vipassana in prisons. At the end of the talk, they said that they would like to visit the Vipassana centre in Tihar Jail.

Day Eleven—January 8, 2004

Goenkaji went to the Bureau of H. H. Dalai Lama in the afternoon to give a press conference urging all the concerned people in the contentious issue of Ramjanambhoomi / Masjid to solve it in an amicable manner. Goenkaji also released an appeal from H. H. Dalai Lama. Goenkaji made it clear that he had no intention of mediating and he was only expressing good wishes for communal harmony among all faiths in India.

Goenkaji often uses the following quote while asking his students to avoid disputes:

*Vivādaṃ bhayato disvā,
avivādañca khemato;
samaggā sakhilā hoṭha,
esā buddhānusāsanī.*

Cariyāpiṭaka 31122, Tassuddāna

Seeing danger in dispute,
Security in concord,
Dwell together in amity.

This is the teaching of the Buddhas.

Afterwards, in an hour-long personal meeting with the Minister for Human Resource Development in the Government of India, Goenkaji explained the essence of the Buddha's teaching, its history in India and its relevance in the India of today. He also drew the minister's attention to factual errors in some textbooks and reference books regarding the Buddha's teaching and Emperor Ashoka's administration.

During this trip to the capital of India, Goenkaji emphasized again and again that the Buddha's teaching

strengthens a country where his teaching is followed sincerely; it does not weaken the country. Many top-ranking police officials met with him during the visit. Today, a lieutenant general phoned to request an interview with Goenkaji because he and his wife had attended a ten-day Vipassana course and had found it extremely beneficial.

Day Twelve—January 9, 2004

The entire morning was taken up by personal meetings with meditators, including a director general of police, who sought guidance on his own meditation; and Tandonji, a senior teacher of Vipassana, who sought guidance on various issues regarding children's courses and Pali education.

In the evening, Goenkaji met the Deputy Prime Minister Advaniji in a personal meeting that lasted an hour. Goenkaji talked in detail about the Buddha's teaching, about Vipassana courses and about Emperor Ashoka's benevolent reign. He explained how the misconceptions about the Buddha are harming Indian society and affecting India's relations with its neighbouring countries.

Day Thirteen—January 10, 2004

Goenkaji met with a few meditators before leaving for the airport to catch a flight to Mumbai.

The visit to Delhi was immensely inspiring for the meditators and Dhamma workers in the Delhi area. It was a major undertaking for Goenkaji and Mataji, considering their age and the severe cold in Delhi. Goenkaji's assistants thanked the hosts Shiv, Seema and Siddhartha Agarwal for their care and hospitality, which made Goenkaji's and Mataji's stay so comfortable.

Goenkaji was pleased to see that the Dhamma work in the Delhi area was progressing in such an efficient and harmonious manner. The visit also allowed Goenkaji to clarify the truth about the Buddha and his teaching to many leaders. ☺

VIPASSANA IN CHINA

"I have a great dream that a time will come when these two great ancient countries—China and India—will unite together on the platform of Vipassana to serve humanity." Goenkaji said to a large group of Chinese old students from mainland China, Taiwan and Malaysia during a discourse at the Global Pagoda in October 2003.

In it, Goenkaji highlighted the importance of spreading Vipassana in the country with the world's largest population. He said: "In the past, these two countries joined together to serve humanity. Once again, history must repeat itself and it's going to repeat itself. When these two spiritual powers unite together, all the religions of the world will join hands."

Clearly, Goenkaji envisions that the spread of Vipassana in China will not only yield great benefits to Chinese society but also serve as a pivotal engine for the growth of Vipassana throughout the world.

Vipassana courses began in mainland China in 1999. The first ten-day course was held from April 20 to May 1, 1999

at Bailin Monastery, a well-known centuries-old monastery located about 150 miles south of Beijing. 117 students, consisting of 61 women and 56 men, completed the course. Upon completion, all the participants, including the conducting assistant teachers, felt great joy at having participated in such a historic event.

After the course, some students volunteered to serve future courses and a few students offered potential course sites for the next ten-day course. The seed of Vipassana was planted in China. Since then, the number of ten-day courses has grown rapidly from two in 2000 and 2001 to five in 2002 and nine in 2003. So far, courses have been held at various temples and monasteries in different parts of China. These locations include Hebei Province in northern China, Fujian Province in south-eastern China, and Sichuan and Hubei Provinces in central China.

The growth of Vipassana courses will accelerate this year, with the construction of four new sites that will be used exclusively for Vipassana meditation practice. Plans are already in place to quickly develop these sites into Vipassana meditation centers managed according to the same guidelines as other Vipassana centers in the rest of the world.

The four new sites are located in Fujian, Hebei, Sichuan and Xinjiang. The Fujian site will be ready for courses in early March, and already 19 ten-day courses are scheduled for this year. The other three sites are slated to be ready for courses from the latter half of this year.

The devotion and generosity of overseas Chinese old students have played a major role in the spread of Vipassana in China during the past five years.

Both overseas Chinese and other foreign Vipassana meditators are invited to give Dhamma service for the above courses in China. Due to the urgent need for servers in China, the China Trust in New York has agreed to pay for the airfare of those ATs and old students who can serve four or more consecutive courses. For more information, contact Mr. Gregory and Mrs. Irene Wong, Hong Kong, Email: irengreg@netvigator.com Tel: (852) 2987-7379; Mobile: (852) 6198 6798; Fax: (852) 2987-8309

FOR COLLEGE STUDENTS: Over the years, thousands of young Vipassana meditators have benefited tremendously by giving Dhamma service during college vacations or soon after completing their studies. The training that they receive during Dhamma service is an ideal preparation to begin a successful career. Serving in a Dhamma land is an essential part of one's progress in Dhamma. For more details, contact Dhamma Giri, Igatpuri 422 403 Tel: (02553) 244076; Email: info@giri.dhamma.org

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NEW RESPONSIBILITIES

Regional Ācaryas

(Goenkaji has appointed Regional Ācaryas to supervise Vipassana activities in an entire region, which may already have one or more area teachers.)

Mr. S. Adaviyappa

Regional Teacher for South India (Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Andhra Pradesh)

Mr. Sudhir and Mrs Madhuri Shah

Regional Teachers for Vidarbha and Chhattisgarh

Mr. Jayesh Soni

Regional Teacher for Gujarat and Course management (male students) in Dhamma Giri and Dhamma Tapovana

Ācaryas

Dr. Bhimsi & Mrs. Pushpa Savla

To serve Baroda and Dhamma Sindhu

Mr. Jayantilal & Mrs. Kamala Thacker

To serve Kutch except Dhamma Sindhu

Mr. Rajesh Mehta

To serve Saurashtra including Dhamma Kota

Dr. (Mrs.) Nirmala Ganla

(Additional responsibility) Statistics and information of worldwide children's courses

Senior Assistant Teachers

Mr. Thakorbhai Parekh

To assist Mr. Bachubhai Shah in serving south Gujarat

Mr. Anil & Mrs. Sunita Dharmadarshi

To assist in serving Dhamma Pīṭha and Dhamma Divākara

Mr. Indravadan S. Kothadia

To assist in serving Dhamma Pīṭha and Dhamma Divākara

NEW APPOINTMENTS

Assistant Teachers

Mr. Chandulal Sureja, *Bhuj, Kutch*

Children's Course Teachers

1. Mr. K. R. Lakshmappa, *Bangalore* 2. Mr. A. Shivaraj, *Bangalore*

3. Mr. K. Srinivas Murthy, *Bangalore* 4. Mrs. Indira Srinivas Murthy, *Bangalore* 5. Mr. M. Robert Lincoln, *Zabeerabad*

6. Mrs. R. Vimala, *Hyderabad* 7. Daw Win Win Myint, *Myanmar*

8. Miss Tara Raju, *Myanmar* 9. Miss Pa Pa Win, *Myanmar*

11. Daw Tin Tin Hlaing, *Myanmar* 12. U Naing Naing Win, *Myanmar*

13. Daw Kyu Kyu San, *Myanmar* 14. Miss Zarni Win, *Myanmar*

15. U Aung Kyaw Khaing, *Myanmar*

16. U Zaw Lin Thu, *Myanmar*