

# Vipassana Newsletter

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

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## WORDS OF DHAMMA

**Mahākāruniko nātho, hitāya sabba paṇinam;  
Pūretvā pāeamī sabbā, patto sambodhimuttamaṃ.**

*Dhammavani Sangrah, (V. R. I.), page no. 13*

The All compassionate One perfected all the *pāramīs* for the welfare and happiness of all beings and attained the highest wisdom.

## 50th anniversary of the Return and Spread of Dhamma: A great occasion to express gratitude to our teacher Mr. Goenkaji

We have strongly resolved to celebrate the Golden Jubilee 50th anniversary of the return and the spread of Vipassana, July 3, 2018 to July 2, 2019, throughout the year. It is hoped that this will be helpful in strengthening the daily practice of all students of Goenkaji. To this end, a one-day course will be held, daily, at the Global Vipassana Pagoda throughout the year. Old Students can avail the benefits of these courses on any day. In other places also people will celebrate this Golden Jubilee ceremony by meditating and practising Dhamma even more seriously. This will be a true expression of gratitude to respected Mr. S. N. Goenkaji.

The vignettes from the life of the world renowned Vipassana teacher Mr. Satyanarayan Goenka, from the days prior to his coming into pure dhamma, are given here with intent that it may inspire others when they see how a person steeped in devotional fervor from a very young age could change so much. We offer this series from his autobiography--**NL Part -5**

## Infinite Devotion towards the Buddha

*Continued ...*

Certainly I carried many misleading prejudices towards the teachings of the Buddha, however it never reflected on my immense sense of respect and devotion towards this exalted being which only grew with time. Prior to the war, there was little interaction with the local people in Burma; we Indians had our own community enclaves which were further subdivided into smaller groups like Marwaris, Gujaratis, Bengalis, Punjabis, Madrasis etc. It was a mini India in Burma and I had grown up in this environment. But post war, my contact with the Burmese increased and grew intimate. I was impressed by their sense of devotion towards the Buddha. I often travelled for business to neighbouring Southeast and East Asian countries which were predominantly Buddhist and felt a sense of pride seeing their deep devotion towards the Buddha. I reflected upon how this man who was born in Nepal and became Buddha in India, was now world renowned and worshipped and deified by so many. The faithful carved statues of him not only in wood, clay, stone, and marble but also in gold and even emerald to worship him. This is truly something for Nepal and India to be proud of. My reverence for him grew on seeing this.

During the post war years in Burma I joined the Ramakrishna Mission and for years remained an active member of the committees which were associated with their cultural activities as well as Sevashram, a charity hospital run by the mission. I was drawn to Shri Ramkrishna Paramhansdev's simple, straightforward teachings as well as his open and generous view of other religions.

But one who attracted me the most was Swami Vivekanand.



*During the Myānmār Dhammayātrā of 2004 Respected Guruji & Mataji along with Sādhsaks offering food to the Monks in the morning.*

I would get mesmerised while reading his lectures, essays, and letters. The love towards nation and also towards religion that had filled my heart since the very childhood was now bursting at the seams.

His words on the Buddha and his teachings became a profound source of inspiration for me. Though he did not agree with his principles, he valued the Buddha's being. His honest, straightforward words were:

"All my life, I have appreciated and valued the Buddha, but not his principles. Among all the exalted ones, I respect him the most. That courage and fearlessness, that deep ocean of love ... that was Buddha, the master who possessed sterling qualities of the mind, the power and also unparalleled qualities of heart – empathetic, expanded heart like the very sky." Impressed by his thoughts, I drank in every word.

As mentioned previously, though I had carried reservations towards the Buddha's teachings since my early years, I was however drawn towards his persona, especially since I had seen my Baba worshipping him. My sense of devotion towards him continued to grow and Vivekanand's inspirational words only added to my fervour towards the Buddha.

Poems written in those days were full of his praises. One of them went:-

*"He, the All-Knower, who is called the Buddha, has descended on the earth; Compassion now spreads everywhere, as the world becomes his follower. People having faith in the Buddha went to the refuge of the Buddha, Dhamma and Saṅgha."*

In another poem entitled ‘Dhamaal’ praising the sacred land of Bharata (India), I wrote in Rajasthani:

“Oh Bharat! This dear land of mine.

It is dearer than hundreds of heavens, my dear land of Bharat.

Most exalted beings like Rama, Krishan, and Buddha too took birth here.

Almighty God hankers after being born here.”

By placing the Buddha alongside the other avatars of god, such as Rama and Krishna, I gave him the highest respect as per my beliefs of those days. I also paid respect to the sacred land of Bharat which is sanctified by avatars of god who long to come here and look for reasons to manifest as avatars in different forms.

### **Ridiculous Irony**

In my writings, I sang paeans of praise of the Buddha on the one hand, while on the other I kept myself away from his teachings, believing them to be unacceptable. What a paradox! What an irony!

I did not wonder, even remotely, how an absolutely Exalted One could ever impart harmful teachings to the world. Or how anyone who gives harmful knowledge to the world could ever be considered great and exalted? How powerful is the impact of beliefs that percolate down through the centuries.

Today when someone says that the Buddha is respect worthy as he is an avatar of our Lord Vishnu, but rejects his teachings as Bauddha religion, what do I do; laugh at this paradox or get angry? Neither. I feel only pity, even when some authoritative figure of society states on a public platform, or at an international Bauddha gathering, that barring a few aspects, the Buddha has adopted his teachings from our Vedic religion, or when someone quotes Manusmriti, (Laws of Manu, Hindu sacred text) saying: -

“*Dhṛtīh kṣamā damo'steyam, śaucamindriyanigrahaḥ.*

*Dhīrvidyā satyamakrodho, Dasakam dharmalakṣaṇam,*

- *Nārdaparovrājakoṇiṣat 3/24*

Meaning, the Buddha only taught these ten dharmas as delineated by Manu. In such gatherings the face of a scholarly bhikkhu delegate participating from the neighbouring country may turn purple with suppressed fury, but I feel no anger, only compassion. After all, I had been trapped in the same misguided belief for years. These people do not know the truth just as I did not know it then. It was my good luck that the truth emerged for me, and others too will learn the reality of this in time and come out of this misunderstanding. They too will then accept the truth in total humility and sincerity. Yes they will, most certainly.

Believing the Buddha to be the ninth avatar of our Lord Vishnu, I was willing to worship him, but with what I had heard about his teachings, all misleading, I was simply not ready to follow in his footsteps. But one issue that he spoke about and which I appreciated unequivocally, was regarding the social status of a person which he said needed to be based on his actions and not by accident of his birth. Other than this, I always believed his teaching to be harmful for the society, and indeed for the nation.

It is a strange, ironic twist that a person who was filled with so many faulty beliefs became so deeply impressed by and benefitted so much from the Buddha's teachings, resulting in him dedicating his life totally to the task of the worldwide dissemination of Dhamma. This followed an unusual event that occurred, benefitting not just him but millions around the world.

### **Rise of My Destiny**

For as long as I can remember I had suffered from migraine headaches. In childhood, an attack would cripple me maybe once in a year or a year and a half. In youth, it escalated to two or three times in a year. By the time I was 25 years old, the intervals kept decreasing, till I suffered an attack every fortnight. The unbearable pain could not be contained by ordinary pain killers and the doctor would give morphine injections. This would alleviate the pain, but the side effects revealed themselves the next day when upon waking up from the drug induced stupor, nausea and nervous anxiety lingered throughout the day.

Once every fortnight I went through this hellish experience of an unbearable headache followed by the morphine induced side effects which lingered for a day or two. The relationship with our family doctor Om Prakash was very warm and he was like a brother to me. Despite a very busy medical practice he always supported me in my social activities. He too was very concerned about my miserable headaches. I had consulted all the known doctors in this field in Myanmar and nothing had helped.

Another five years passed and the interval between the migraine attacks was reduced to every 8 to 10 days, and the morphine dose had to be increased. Dr. Om Prakash was concerned that I may get addicted to morphine and need to take it on a daily basis. What a miserable condition that would be. We were all seriously worried. After much consideration and consultation with other specialists in the field he said: “You often go abroad for your business, this time go just to seek medical help. It is unlikely that you will get relief from migraine, but, who knows, you may get a better alternative to morphine for pain management.”

This made not just me, but my family and friends worried too. A close Burmese friend, U Chan Htoon, the first Burmese attorney general of independent Burma and subsequently a judge on the supreme court, knew that the fees of doctors abroad were not only very high, but also that seeing them would involve waiting for many days for treatment, which would make it even more costly. He gave me an introductory letter to present to his friends who were stationed in Burmese diplomatic enclaves in Western countries, which proved to be of great help to me.

In the U.S.A., the representative of the Indian government at that time, Mr Jaipal, had become a close friend as he visited Burma often. His help proved to be invaluable in making it easy to get treated under senior doctors in Switzerland, Germany, England and the U.S.A. With his help I was able to get an appointment with a well known physician in New York, Dr. Hitzick, who was an expert on migraines. Smt. Vijaya lakshmi Pandit, a senior politician and sister of Jawaharlal Nehru, suffered from the same malady and was completely cured with his treatment. As luck would have it, not only he, but all the other doctors I saw failed to give me any relief. We had a branch office in Japan, and the doctors there too tried their best but despite a huge expenditure in time and money, there was no success. Leave alone migraine, there was no relief even from morphine.

After months of chasing after relief, I returned home totally dejected. Migraine attacks now came weekly and everyone was very troubled, especially my friend U Chan Htoon. One day he said: “As migraine is a psychosomatic disease and related to mental stress, once you get free from stress, the relief will automatically follow.” I perceived the rationale of his words as I saw that in the last five to seven years, not only my business but my social commitments as well had expanded immensely, putting huge pressure on my mind. Moreover, having arrogance due to the inordinate success achieved very early in life, an aggressive alpha male attitude and a huge temper added to this stress. I could not see a way out and did not know how to de-stress. I tried to rest more, tried yogic shavasana, a process to relax the muscles of the entire body as well as the mind, and sang bhajans, all to no avail.

One day when I met my friend U Chan Htoon he mentioned that the Accountant General of the Burmese government, Sayagyi U Ba Khin, taught meditation. He said: “This should certainly help you as it is likely to reduce your stress and calm the mind. Why not meet him.” He added, “I will arrange your meeting.” I did not respond and came home. Taking my silence to be an affirmation from me, he set up a meeting at the official residence of Sayagyi on the banks of Royal lake.

I was in a quandary. U Chan Htoon was the internationally renowned Burmese leader of the World Buddhist Conference that was currently being held, and the head organiser for the Buddhist Organisation that was holding the Sixth *Saṅgāyana Tipitaka* under the auspices of the Burmese government. Doubtlessly the meditation that he was suggesting belonged to the Buddhist religion. How could I accept that? We chant ‘Om Namah Shivaya’. They will ask us to chant ‘Om Namah Buddhaya’. What if I become a Buddhist while chanting it? I will end up becoming an

atheist and end up in hell. I felt that I could not do this. No matter if I was to die with this pain I could not relinquish my religion and join someone else's.

The words of the Gita echoed in my mind:

*Svadharme Nidhanam śreyah, paradharmo bhayā vahah.*

“To die within one's own religion is better; the others' religion is terrifying.”

It was now the evening of the following day, time for me to meet with Sayagyi U Ba Khin. It would have been discourteous not to go to the meeting, as U Chan Htoon was not just my friend, but a well known Buddhist leader. Not to go despite the appointment being fixed would be very insulting and my friend would think that I was truly against the Buddha. With these thoughts swirling in my head and with thousands of hesitations, I went to the house of Sayagyi at the appointed hour. I saw that he was alone in the house, perhaps his wife had gone out. My eyes took in the details. There were no servants around and the furniture was very ordinary, like that belonging to an ordinary bureaucrat; simple, spartan. I found that I liked sitting near him in that wholesome environment. Tranquil peace permeated his face, indeed the whole atmosphere exuded peace. As soon as I sat down he said, “U Chan Htoon has spoken about you, and you have come here to treat your migraine, correct? Sorry but I am unable to help you. I cannot impart this knowledge just to treat your migraine. For this you will have to go to a doctor. What I teach is an immensely high level, spiritual knowledge and technique, Vipassana, and it belongs to your country. It should not be demoted to merely treating a physical ailment. Hence I cannot teach you this sadhana.”

I was stunned. He knew well that I belonged to a renowned Indian family, and was a successful businessman as well as a social worker. I held a respected position in the Burmese society and knew many Burmese leaders well. Any commercially minded religious leader would have been proud to have a rich and well known person as his disciple – while Sayagyi, totally unconcerned, made a blunt statement that he could not teach me Vipassana. Strangely, these words drew me to him. Here was someone who was truly unaffected, detached, free from worldly enticements.

Then he patiently and lovingly gave the following explanation: “If you want to set up a sugar mill, you do so to obtain sugar, not for molasses, correct? Molasses will certainly be derived, but as a byproduct. Your aim will remain the manufacture of sugar, correct? Similarly, if you adopt this highly developed knowledge for its spiritual achievements, the mind will get purified. And a mind free of defilements will naturally be free from stress. As a result, a migraine may disappear; this result will be automatically achieved as a byproduct.” This was the best analogy that a trader and a businessman could have been given. “Hence,” he said lovingly, “whenever you decide to come to rid your mind of defilements, you will find the doors open. But if your goal is to free yourself of migraine, then do not come.” I was taken aback. The importance that he gave to spiritual knowledge as compared to ordinary worldly knowledge impressed me and I felt a deep sense of respect for him.

(.. from the Autobiography of Mr. SN Goenka) -- Continued ..

### Children's Meditation Courses in Mumbai

(Note: details in next issue.)

### Daily One-day courses at Global Pagoda

One-day courses will start at 11a.m. and end at 5 pm. Those who have completed at least one 10-day course taught by S. N. Goenka in the tradition of Sayagyi U Ba Khin can take part in them. It is necessary to know the number of participants so that proper arrangements can be made for them. Therefore please register. Registration is easy. Just write 'yes' with 'date' on this mobile no. 8291894644 on WhatsApp or by SMS on 8291894645.

## Celebrating 50 years of the Journey of Dhamma

To mark the Golden Jubilee year of the completion of the first Vipassana Course in India, the following events are organized:

### Documentation of the Journey

A team under the guidance of Mr. Vimal Surana is collecting all kinds of anecdotes, memories and reminiscences of students with Pujya Guruji & Mataji, including students' experiences in the spread of Dhamma. Those who have been associated with Vipassana for a long time are requested to contribute their experiences to inspire the future generations. If you have any audios, videos, text or photos containing dialogues/discussions/interactions with Goenkaji or Mataji, please send it to the following address for archiving purpose. It may be used on the appropriate occasions. **Contact: 1. Mr. Rampratap Yadav V.R.I. Dhammagiri, Igatpuri, 422403, Dist Nashik, E-mail 50yearsofdhamma@vridhamma.org. WhatsApp no. 7977380198. 2. Ms. Jyoti Deo (WhatsApp no. +91 9820997136).**

### Special event at the Global Vipassana Pagoda

A special event at the Global Vipassana Pagoda has been arranged on **January 30, 2019**, on the occasion of the birth anniversary of Shri S. N. Goenka. It will be a whole day program open to all Vipassana meditators in this tradition. ATs, Trustees and Dhamma servers who had an opportunity to assist Goenkaji in his noble mission of spread of Dhamma, in any way, are specially invited to attend this event. The presentation/video, capturing the journey of Dhamma and launch of books, will be a part of this event. **Contact: 022-28451204, 022-62427544- Extn. no. 9, मो.- 82918 94644. (Tel booking: 11 am to 5 pm daily). Online Regn: <http://oneday.globalpagoda.org/register>**

### One-day course at Panchayati Wadi, Mumbai

On June 21, 1969, Mr. S. N. Goenka arrived in India from Myanmar, bringing back Vipassana, the priceless jewel of Dhamma, and the first 10-day Vipassana course was arranged in the country of its origin after a gap of nearly two millennia.

This first Vipassana course was conducted by Mr. S. N. Goenka in Panchayati Wadi rest-house, near Kalbadevi, Mumbai from July 3 to 13, 1969 with 14 students, setting the Wheel of Dhamma in motion in modern times. To mark this momentous event, **two one-day courses** in a day are arranged at the same Panchayati Wadi for Vipassana meditators in this tradition on January 31, 2019. **First session 9am to 1:30pm and Second session 3 to 7:30pm. Please arrive 45 minutes before the course starts for accommodation allotment. Venue: Panchayati Wadi rest-house, 41, second Panjarapol lane, CP Tank - Madhavbaug, Mumbai-400004.**

For registration of the above two events, please **book. Contact: +91 9930268875, +91 9967167489, +91 7738822979 (Tel booking: 10 am to 8 pm daily). Online registration: <http://oneday.globalpagoda.org/register>**



#### Additional Responsibilities

- 1-2. Mrs Nirmala Patel (SAT) And Shri Ramesh Jain (SAT); to assist to CAT Aurangabad in Dhamma Ajanta, Aurangabad .
3. Shri Sangram Jondhale SAT; to assist CAT Aurangabad in development of centres at Hingoli and Parbhani in Marathwada area.
4. Miss Priti Dedhia; to assist CAT Dhamma Tapovana 1-2, Igapuri.
5. Shri Ram Mangal Singh to assist Centre Teacher in serving Dhamma Lakkhana, Lucknow.

#### New Responsibilities Teacher

1. Dr. Tian-Ming Sheu, Taiwan
2. Dr. (Mrs.) Yuh-Wen Wang, Taiwan

#### Senior Assistant Teachers

- 1-2. Mr. Deepak and Mrs Deepa Narkhede, Jalgaon
3. Shri Kumar Pandiyan, Rajasthan
4. Mrs. Alice Pan, Taiwan
5. Mrs. Hsiu-Yueh Weng, Taiwan
6. Mrs. Jui-Mei Hsieh, Taiwan
7. Mr. Ying-Mao Lin, Taiwan
8. Mr. Po-hsiu Chang, Taiwan
9. Mrs. Tung-Mei Tsai, Taiwan
10. Ms Jo-Hsin Hsiao, Taiwan
11. Mrs. Song Jun-Ying, China
12. Mrs. Florence Qiaoling Fang, China

#### Newly Appointed Assistant Teachers

1. Dr. Dinesh Rathi, Nagpur
2. Dr. Priti Pai, Goa
3. Smt. Sunanda Khaire, Bhilai, Chhattisgarh
4. Ms. Risana Tilkanont, Thailand

#### Children course teachers

1. Mrs. Manuela Romero, Spain



## Centuries Corpus Fund for the Operation of Global Vipassana Pagoda

Guruji desired that a corpus fund should be set up for the GLOBAL VIPASSANA PAGODA so that it may continue its noble objective of serving countless beings for 2500 years.

A Centuries Corpus Fund of Rs. 125 crores is being set up by the "Global Vipassana Foundation" to meet the cost of Creation, Building, Operation and Maintenance for the Global Vipassana Pagoda. If 8760 people were to donate a sum of Rs. 1,42,694/- (one lac forty-two thousand six hundred and ninety-four rupees) a corpus of 125 crores will result. And each of the 8760 donors will earn merits of having donated for one hour of the Global Vipassana Pagoda for its entire lifetime of 2500 years. The interest earned from the donation will meet the cost of Creation, Building Operation, and Maintenance expenses now and in the future. Saints have said that for as long as Lord Buddha's corporeal relics remain, his teaching will also be maintained. This magnificent durable stone Pagoda will keep the Buddha-Relics safe for thousands of years and help ensure that the practice of Vipassana Meditation is kept alive. May everyone (meditators and non-meditators) avail themselves of this meritorious opportunity that shall benefit countless beings for centuries together to come out of the circle of life and death and also help benefit the donors in fulfilling their Dana-Parami. For more information and to send funds, **Contact: Global Vipassana Foundation (GVF)**,

1. Mr. Derik Pegado, 9921227057. or 2. Mr. Bipin Mehta, Mo. 9920052156, A/c. Office: 022-62427512 / 62427510; Email--audits@globalpagoda.org; Bank Details: 'Global Vipassana Foundation', Axis Bank Ltd., Sonimur Apartments, Timber Estate, Malad (W), Mumbai - 400064, Branch - Malad (W). Bank A/c No.- 911010032397802; IFSC No.- UTIB0000062; Swift code: AXISINBB062. ....

## Dhamma Yatra of Meditators

Dhamma Yatra for Vipassana meditators is being arranged in a group of 150 students. The first group will start their journey on the night of Jan 31, 2019.

Itinerary of the first group: 31st Jan., 2019: start from Mumbai to Varanasi by train in a sleeper class. 1st Feb. from Sarnath by AC bus to Kapilavatu, Lumbini, Sravasti, Kushinagar, Vaishali, Nalanda, Rajgir etc. 11th Feb: end of journey at Bodhgaya. 13th Feb: Arrival at Mumbai from Bodhgaya/Gaya. The cost of the Yatra will be around Rs. 45,000 to 50,000 which will cover the cost of **travel, accommodation at different places and food**. Arrangement of stay and food will be made at local viharas and hotels. Those who are interested to join the Yatra, please register their names on Mob. +91-7506943663.

## One-day Mega course and Mahāsaṅghadāna at Global Vipassana Pagoda for 2019

**Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> May**, Buddha Purnima; **Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> July**, Ashadha-Purnima (Dharmachakka Pravartan day); **Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> September** On the occasion of the death Anniversary of Rev. Goenkaji & Sharad Purnima. **One-day mega course** at GVP onwards till 4 pm. Non-meditators may participate in the 3 pm discourse. Please come only with prior registration. **Samaggānaṃ tapo sukho**: Avail of the immense benefit of meditating in large group. **For registration Contact:** 022-62427544, 022-28451170 Extn: 9, Mob. 8291894644 (Tel booking: 11 am to 5 pm daily). Online registration: <http://oneday.globalpagoda.org/register>

**29<sup>th</sup> September -- Saṅghadāna** On the occasion of the **death Anniversary** of Rev. Goenkaji is being organized at **9 a.m.** Those who wish to take part in the meritorious **Saṅghadāna**, they should **Contact:** 1. Mr Derik Pegado, 9921227057. or 2. Sri Bipin Mehta, Mo. 9920052156, Tel: 022- 62427512 (9:30 AM to 5:30 PM), Email: [audits@globalpagoda.org](mailto:audits@globalpagoda.org).

## DHAMMA DOHA

*Jaba samyaka sambuddha kā, jaga men udgama hoyā,  
Dharatī ke ākāśa ke, prāṇī harakhita honya.*

When the perfectly Enlightened Buddha is born in the world, All beings of the earth and the heaven rejoice.

*Prakaṭen samyaka Buddha to, hoyā jagata kalyāṇa,  
Dūra hoyā ajñāna saba, jage satya kā jñāna.*

When the perfectly Enlightened One is born, he benefits the whole world. Ignorance is dispelled and the knowledge of the truth dawns.

*Samsthāpana ho dharma kā, pāpa ukhaḍatā jāya,  
Sabhī kālpanika mānyatā, svatah dūra ho jāya.*

Dhamma is established, and adhamma is dispersed, All imaginary theories and philosophies are proved incorrect.

*Hove jñāna parokṣa to, ulajhana baḍhatī jāya,  
Bina jāne hī mānyatā, sira para caḍhatī jāya.*

When the knowledge is not direct (not at the experiential level), complications arise, Such knowledge makes one proud and haughty.

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