

# Vipassana Newsletter

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

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## WORDS OF DHAMMA

*Ubhinnamattham carati,  
attano ca parassa ca;  
param sankupitam natvā,  
yo sato upasammati.*

—*Samyutta Nikāya 1.188*

Knowing that the other person is angry,  
one who remains mindful and calm,  
acts for one's own best interest  
as well as for the other's interest.

## The Great Renunciation

(The following articles have been excerpted from 'Glimpses of the Buddha's Life,' published by VRI. For more information, contact [vri\\_admin@dhamma.net.in](mailto:vri_admin@dhamma.net.in).)

### Four Omens

It is true that Prince Siddhattha Gotama went for a visit to the city and saw a diseased person, an old man, a dead man and a monk. Then he was profoundly affected. Impelled by a powerful Dhamma impulse, he renounced the household life. Even before this event, he had been thinking that the path of liberation from all suffering cannot be discovered remaining at home and that he had to leave home for his quest.

However, this does not mean that he had seen these four omens for the first time in his life. When he left his house he was twenty-nine. At that time his father and his aunt Mahapajapati were both more than eighty years old. He must have surely seen the grey hair of his father and his aunt and also seen them becoming sick. In his palace or at maternal grandparents' house, some members must have been afflicted by illness and must have died. Certainly, he must have heard about his own mother who had died a few days after his birth. He must have been distressed by it.

Many believe that the prince stayed in the palace until the age of 29 and never went to the city before this. This belief is negated in the ancient Pali scriptures. When the prince came to Kapilavatthu after his enlightenment and went on his alms round, Rahula's mother saw him and said, 'The prince who used to go about in this city in golden palanquin dressed in the princely attire is today on his alms round with shaven head, bowl in his hand and wearing a monk's robe.'

(*Vinayaṭṭhake Mahāvagga-aṭṭhakathā- 105, Rāhulavattukathā*)

This proves that when he saw these four omens, he was not visiting the city for the first time. He had been there on numerous occasions.

But on that day when he saw the three omens, he thought, 'Do all beings have to suffer these states of woe? Is there a way out?' Due to these thoughts he must have become further distressed, alarmed and impelled.

At that time he happened to see a monk. He must have seen monks before. Monks must have come to his palace for alms because his was the royal family in the *samaṇa* tradition. Giving alms to monks was the fundamental duty of householders. However, on seeing this monk while he was profoundly stirred, he decided that he himself would have to find a way out of the cycle of life and death. This search wouldn't be possible by staying at home. It was necessary to leave the household life to seek the way out of all suffering.

This is the real importance of these four omens. Because of the first three omens he was extremely moved, so they can be called inspirational omens (*samvega nimitta*). The fourth can be called the chief omen (*padhāna nimitta*) because this omen inspired him to leave the household life and strive for liberation.

Even if the prince did not see these four omens for the first time, it is clear that these four omens were instrumental in his leaving home and becoming a recluse. That's why it is said in Tipitaka,

*Nimitte chaturō disvā, assayānena nikkhamiṃ.*

(*Buddhavamsa-Pāli, 27.16, Gotamabuddhavamsa*)

On seeing these four omens, he mounted his horse and left the household life.

## Taking up the Robes of a Recluse

The Prince crossed the river Anoma and removed all his princely clothes and ornaments. He gave them to Chandaka and wore the robes of a recluse (*samaṇa*). He did not become a recluse in the Vedic tradition. Instead of growing his hair, beard and moustache, he cut them off and wore the robes of a recluse. This was appropriate because he was born and brought up in the *samaṇa* tradition.

Although many astrologers in the court were brahmins and the royal priest Asita Devala was also a brahmin, the royal tradition was based on the *samaṇa* tradition. The brahmin astrologers in the kingdom and family had an upper hand because the recluses (*samaṇas*) were banned from taking up astrology or performing any rites and rituals. Therefore, these jobs were done by brahmin priests. This was a tradition since ancient times and it also continued later.

However, the *samaṇa* tradition had a deep influence on the court brahmins. The royal priest Asita Devala wept when he saw the infant Siddhattha for the first time. Asita knew that by the time Siddhattha attained enlightenment, he would be dead and thus would be deprived of his teaching. Therefore, he sent a message to his nephew Nalaka to immediately follow the *samaṇa* tradition so that when Siddhattha attained liberation in future, Nalaka could learn the Dhamma from him and get liberated.

The nephew followed the instructions of his uncle. He gave up his household life and took robes. After waiting for 35 years, he learnt Vipassana from the Buddha, went to the Himalayas, meditated and reached the stage of arahathood.

Thus, it is clear that the *samaṇa* tradition had a great influence on the brahmin royal priest and his family members. Not only the court-brahmin astrologers but also many prominent brahmin leaders of those times was impressed by the thirty-two signs of a great man on the body of the prince.

When Prince Siddhattha took robes, Kondanna (*Koṇḍañña*) a brahmin astrologer of the Sakyan republic together with the sons of four other brahmin astrologers also took robes, and meditated with the Bodhisatta.

In spite of the influence of the brahmin astrologers on the royal family, Prince Siddhattha chose the life of a *samaṇa*. In addition, to learn meditation, he did not go to sanyasis of the Vedic tradition but decided to go to Alara Kalama of Magadha who was a famous *samaṇa* teacher of those times.

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About fifty years after Emperor Asoka, the country experienced an unfortunate storm that wiped out the technique of Vipassana. The words of

the Buddha (*pariyatti*) also gradually disappeared. During this dark period, some people out of ignorance and some out of antagonism corrupted the teaching of the Buddha and added fanciful stories to them.

One of the stories was that the recluse prince went to many sanyasis and *tantrics* to study. On the basis of this study, he attained enlightenment in Bodhgaya under the Bodhi tree. Would the person who left the household life to gain the supreme enlightenment of a Buddha, and who earlier had heard about the prophecy of attaining enlightenment in the future, go to sanyasis and *tantrics*?

Unfortunately many such baseless stories about the Buddha were spread in India. ☺

## Goenkaji's Discourses on Television

**Aastha:** Daily, 9:40 am

**Zee: Urja,** Daily, 4:30 am

**Hungama and Bindass:** Daily, 4.30 to 6.00 am

**USA: Aastha** 6 pm EST (Monday to Friday) on Worlddirect platform of Directv on channel no. 2005.

(Please confirm exact timings.)

## New Website of Vipassana Research Institute

VRI has launched a new website: [www.vridhamma.org](http://www.vridhamma.org). This website has a new design, user-friendly display and new features such as video downloads. Soon it will host an online shopping facility for books, CD's and DVD's. With this launch the old VRI site has been closed and automatically redirects visitors to the new website.

## Pali Workshops

The following Pali workshops have been organized for Hindi-speaking Vipassana meditators from India and Nepal:

1. **Jaipur:** 23 to 31 May 2009 at Kothari Farms (Marugandha), Bhankrota-Jaisinghpura Road, 2 kms. off Jaipur-Ajmer Express Highway, Bhankrota, Jaipur. For registration, contact Ms. Meghana, Mobile: 96028-48896. Email: [paliworkshop@yahoo.co.in](mailto:paliworkshop@yahoo.co.in)

2. **Indore:** 15 to 23 August 2009 at Pukhraj Palace, Phuthi Kothi, Indore. For registration, contact Mrs. Sangeetha Chaudhary, 81, Bairathi Colony, Opposite Sindhi Colony, Indore 452 014, M.P. Mobile: 98930- 29167. Email: [dhammalwa@yahoo.co.in](mailto:dhammalwa@yahoo.co.in)

## Pali Workshop in the US

Pariyatti is holding a Pali Workshop from 14 April to 15 May, 2010 near Seattle, USA. Mr. and Mrs. S.N. Tandon will facilitate and guide this workshop. Contact: [pali-workshop-info-subscribe@pariyatti.org](mailto:pali-workshop-info-subscribe@pariyatti.org).

## Vipassana Course for Priests and Nuns

A ten-day Vipassana course from 22 May to 2 June 2009 has been organized at Atma Darshan, Andheri, Mumbai for Christian priests and nuns.

Accommodations is restricted to about 50 applicants.

For more information about the course, application forms and for registration, please contact: 1. Sr. Regina, Atma Darshan, Off Sher-e-Punjab Bus Stop, Gyan Ashram, Mahakali Caves Road, Andheri (E), Mumbai 400 093. Tel: (022) 2824-2419, 2836-3120; Email: [atma@mtnl.net.in](mailto:atma@mtnl.net.in) 2. Mr. Jayantilal Shah, Tel: Res. (022) 2618 2601, 2614 3999; Off. 2837 0250; Fax: 2837 9337; Email: [jsshah@molygraph.com](mailto:jsshah@molygraph.com)

### One-day Courses at Global Pagoda with Goenkaji

The following one-day courses will be organized in the main meditation hall of the Global Vipassana Pagoda. Goenkaji will be present during these one-day courses, health permitting. (One-day Vipassana courses are only for those who have completed a ten-day Vipassana course.)

#### List of one-day courses

- 19 April 2009, third Sunday
- 9 May 2009, Saturday, Buddha Purnima
- 7 June 2009, Sunday, Purnima
- 7 July 2009, Tuesday, Guru Purnima
- 16 August 2009, third Sunday
- 20 September 2009, third Sunday
- 4 October 2009, Sunday, Ashwini Purnima
- 15 November 2009, third Sunday
- 20 December 2009, third Sunday
- 19 January 2010, Sayagi U Ba Khin anniversary
- 26 January 2010, Sunday
- 8 February 2010, Global Pagoda inauguration anniversary
- 6 March 2010, Saturday, Sayagi U Ba Khin anniversary

#### Registration for these one-day courses is compulsory.

**Contact:** Mr. I. B. V. Raghvan, Mobile: 98928-55692, 98928-55945, Tel: (022) 2845-2111, 2845-1204 ext. 105. Email: globalvipassana@gmail.com and globalpagoda@hotmail.com  
Websites: www.globalpagoda.org and www.vridhamma.org.

Meditators are requested to bring your own water bottles, which can be refilled at the Pagoda. They should switch off their mobile phones and observe noble silence during the course. There is no facility available at present for overnight stay of one-day course students at the Global Pagoda.

(In addition to these courses, one-day courses are conducted every Sunday from 11 am to 4 pm at the Pagoda. For gate pass to visit the Pagoda, call: Tel: (022) 2845-2111, 2845-2261. Website: www.globalpagoda.org; Email: globalpagoda@hotmail.com; Tel/Fax: 2845-2112.)

#### Message from Mrs. Sonia Gandhi, President, AICC

The Global Vipassana Pagoda in Mumbai is not only a beautiful new landmark, it is also a glowing beacon of peace and non-violence, radiating hope, harmony and a powerful healing touch.

In recent years, the practice of Vipassana is attracting more and more people of all ages in India. Its meditation regime that emphasizes self-observation and mental purification, enables us to better understand ourselves, and through detachment, to rediscover the universal and eternal truth that are often lost sight of in the midst of busy, stressful daily lives.

Such reflection and meditation, shorn of superstition, ritual and narrow sectarianism, not only helps us to find answers to the doubts and questions that are a part of the human condition. It also gives us the strength to cope with pain and suffering and reach out to others with humility, understanding and compassion. Through the practice of Vipassana, we are able to live our lives with greater serenity.

I am sure the Global Vipassana Pagoda, with its magnificent meditation hall, will help spread peace, harmony and the noble message of Lord Buddha. I am sure too that this Pagoda, which reflects the architectural genius, the artistic skill and, above all, the deep spiritual faith of all those involved with its construction, will be an abiding symbol of peace not just for Mumbai and India but for the entire world.

**NOTE:** Vipassana Newsletter subscribers whose mailing address has changed should send both their old and new addresses to the Patrika Section, VRI, Dhamma Giri 422 403. Please mention the computer code number printed above the subscriber name in the address label in all correspondence about non-receipt of Newsletters, change in address, receipt of extra copies, change in language etc.

### Visiting the Global Vipassana Pagoda.

The Global Vipassana Pagoda was inaugurated on 8 February 2009 by the President of India, and is now open to the public. The Pagoda remains open to the public between 9:00 am and 6:00 pm on all days.

Visitors coming by car will have to park their vehicles at the Esselworld car park itself. Parking charges are as applicable. A shuttle bus service will run from the car park to the Global Pagoda and back once every hour on weekdays and once every 30 minutes on Sundays and holidays.

Visitors can also avail of ferry (boat) service to visit the Global Vipassana Pagoda directly from Borivali (West) via Gorai Creek or Malad (West) via Marve Beach. Please note that Esselworld ferry ticket charges are applicable for availing of the ferry service.

#### Tourist Guides Needed at Global Pagoda

The number of visitors at Global Vipassana Pagoda is increasing day-by-day. About five to ten Dhamma servers are required as tourist guides so these visitors can get suitable explanation about the Pagoda. Preference will be given to servers who have previous experience as tourist guides. Part-time service is also acceptable. Training will be given to suitable applicants as well as remuneration. Dhamma servers are also required for sale of souvenirs. Vipassana meditators are requested to contact personally with all relevant details.

#### Other Servers Required

There is a need for general manager as well as Dhamma servers to look after the maintenance of the Global Vipassana Pagoda. Vipassana meditators who have specific skills in plumbing, electricity, gardening, landscaping, painting, housekeeping, etc. are requested to apply with all relevant details. Suitable honorarium may be given if required.

**Contact:** Global Vipassana Foundation, Green House, Second floor, Green Street, Fort, Mumbai 400 023. Tel: 2266-4039, 2266-2113. Email: globalpagoda@hotmail.com and spgoenka@goenkasons.com

#### Bhopal Vipassana Centre

Construction of *Dhamma Pāla*, Bhopal Vipassana Centre is in progress. Forty single rooms for male students and thirty rooms for female students have been completed.

Regular ten-day courses will be held soon after the rest of the construction is completed, at an estimated cost of Rs. 50 lakhs. Initially one course will be held each month and later two courses every month.

Madhya Pradesh Vipassana Samiti, Bhopal is now registered under Foreign Contributions (Regulation) Act 1976 with registration No.063160164.

1) Foreign donors can make remittance through SWIFT transfer to State Bank of India and transfer details are SWIFT Code - SBIN-IN BB 117; Branch Code 01920; Beneficiary: Madhya Pradesh Vipassana Samiti; State Bank of India, Branch: Shivaji Nagar (Bhopal) 462 016 (India) Branch Code 05798; Account No. 30170426177; IFSC - SBI0005798

2) Donations from anywhere in India can be remitted through any branch of State Bank of India under Core Banking System Beneficiary: Madhya Pradesh Vipassana Samiti, Account No. 10064522214; State Bank of India, Branch: Shivaji Nagar (Bhopal) 462 016, India Branch Code 05798.

NB To enable quick dispatch of receipt for donation, please inform all relevant details to Madhya Pradesh Vipassana Samiti, Bhopal 462 016; Email: dhammapal@airtelmail.in or mpvneer@airtelmail.in

#### Online Vipassana Newsletters and Archives

For archives of the VRI Newsletter in English, Hindi, Telugu, Tamil, Gujarati and Malayalam, visit: www.vri.dhamma.org/newsletters

**Children's Courses in Mumbai**

To serve children's courses in Mumbai, call 98200-22990.

Date	Venue	Age	Registration
5-4	South Mumbai	9-16 years	2 & 3-4
19-4	Ghatkopar	9-16 years	16 & 17-4
3-5	South Mumbai	14-18 years	30-4 & 1-5
10-5	Ulhasnagar	10-12 years	7 & 8-5
17-5	Ghatkopar	9-16 years	14 & 15-5

**Course Timings:** 8:30 am to 2:30 pm.

**Registration:** 11 am to 1 pm

**Course Venues:** **Andheri(W):** Dada Saheb Gaikwad Sansthan, Babasaheb Ambedkar Marg, RTO Corner, Four Bungalows. Tel: 2501-1096, 2516-2505. **Ghatkopar(W):** SNTD School, New Bldg., Cama Lane, Opp. Vidyut Soc. Tel: 2510-1096, 2516-2505. **Goregaon(W):** Siddharth Municipal Hospital, Opp. Motilal Nagar Post Office. Tel 2308-1622. **Matunga:** Amulakh Amirchand High School, Rafi Ahmed Kidwai Rd, New SNTD College, King's Circle. Tel: 2510-1096, 2516-2505. **South Mumbai:** Tel: 2308-1622. **Ulhasnagar:** Guru Nanak School, Kurla Camp, Ulhasnagar-4. Tel: (0251) 252-2693.

NB Please: \*bring cushion, \*register on specified phone numbers, \*inform in advance if unable to attend after registration, \*arrive on time for the course.

**NEW RESPONSIBILITIES**

**Senior Assistant Teachers:**

1. & 2. Mr. Gulabrao & Mrs. Mangala Mali, *Dhule*
3. Ms. Juechan Limchitti, *Thailand*
4. Mr. Mike Cacciola, *USA* 5. Ms. Greta Gible, *USA*
6. & 7. Mr. John and Mrs. Susanne Hing, *USA*
8. Mr. Tim Lanning, *USA*

**NEW APPOINTMENTS**

**Assistant Teachers:**

1. Mr. Chamanlal Padhiar, *Rajkot*
2. Mr. Vinod Raichura, *Rajkot*
3. & 4. Mr. Mahendra & Mrs. Ranjan Shah, *Mumbai*
5. Mr. Byambajav Dorlig, *Mongolia*
6. Mr. Boris Prpic, *Croatia*
7. Mr. Roel Smelt, *the Netherlands*
8. & 9. Mr. Kedaar & Mrs. Anita Ghanekar, *Canada*
10. Ms. Clotilde Pelletier, *Canada*

**Children's Course Teachers:**

1. Mr. Jagdish Prajapati, *Modasa* 2. Ms. Kanchan Jesalpura, *Ahmedabad*
3. Mr. Vijay Todi, *Ahmedabad* 4. Ms. Neha Dharmadarshi, *Gandhinagar*
5. Mr. Bhargava Dhirenghai Karia, *Ahmedabad* 6. Ms. Malini Priyadarshi, *Gandhinagar*
7. Ms. Daxa Sanghdeep, *Gandhinagar* 8. Ms. Vina Thaker, *Gandhinagar*
9. Mr. Kamal Krishna Acharya, *Nashik*
10. Ms. Nary POC, *Cambodia*

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

*Prajñā śīla samādhi kī, babe trivenī dhāra.*  
*Dubakī 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.*  
*Tiṇoṇ kā saṅgama hove, pragate pada niravāṇa.*  
 The true Ganges, Jamuna and Saraswati  
 are morality, concentration and wisdom;  
 Where the three converge, nibbāna manifests.

*With best compliments from*

**MOTILAL BANARSIDASS**

41 U.A. Bungalow Road, Jawahar Nagar, Delhi 110 007  
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 Kolkata, Tel: 22824872, Patna, Tel: 2671442; Varanasi, Tel: 2412331.

*With much mettā,*  
**A Vipassana meditator**

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