

Vipassana Newsletter

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

Vol. 20, No. 2: 28 February 2010

Annual Subscription: Rs 30; Life Subscription: Rs. 500

Published every month by Vipassana Research Institute

Web version: www.vridhamma.org/Newsletter_Home.aspx

WORDS OF DHAMMA

*Pabbatassa suvaṇṇassa,
jātarūpassa kevalo
dvittāva nālamekassa:
iti vidvā samañcare.*

—*Samyutta Nikāya 1.156*

Were there a mountain all made of gold,
doubled that would not be enough
to satisfy a single person:
know this and live accordingly.

The Pagoda: A Symbol of Gratitude

S. N. Goenka

(The following has been translated and adapted from Goenkaji's article in the February 2010 issue of the Hindi Vipassana Patrika.)

Shortly after the Buddha became enlightened, two merchants from Myanmar received hair relics from him and brought these back to their country. There the relics were enshrined on Shwedagon Hill in Yangon and a pagoda was built to mark the spot. At the same time, the Sule Pagoda was built in Yangon and the Botathoung Pagoda was built nearby beside the river. Some people who lacked understanding may have felt that it was wrong to spend money on building these pagodas when there was so much poverty in the country. Criticism may have been voiced as well when the Shwedagon Pagoda was enlarged and covered with gold, when the golden canopy was put in place, and when thousands of pagodas were built and decorated throughout Myanmar.

In Thailand too, an emerald statue of the Buddha was enshrined in a grand pagoda, and many other pagodas were built. The people of Cambodia, Laos, Java, and Sumatra also built many pagodas, the largest being at Borobodur. In Sri Lanka as well, the relics of the Buddha and Bhikkhu Mahinda were enshrined in pagodas. I do not know whether there was opposition to the construction of these pagodas. What is certain is that the benefits derived from them are infinite.

The Sacred Land of India

People in these countries built pagodas similar to the stupas in India, which enshrined the relics of the Buddha. The purpose of the pagodas built in other lands was to serve as reminders that the Buddha's beneficent teaching had been received from India.

Today, even though 2,200 years have passed, the people of Myanmar have great respect and devotion towards India, the country from which they received the pure Dhamma.

Many years ago, I was a member of a delegation accompanying U Nu, then Prime Minister of Myanmar, to India. After our plane landed in Calcutta, it was time to disembark. U Nu descended from the aircraft but before stepping on the ground, he sat on the lowest step and rubbed some of the dust from the runway onto his forehead. This was his way of paying respects to the land of India. Like him, countless people from neighbouring countries come to India with deep devotion as pilgrims.

Emperor Ashoka

Emperor Ashoka sent the original teaching of the Buddha and the beneficent technique of Vipassana to the golden land of Myanmar, where it has been preserved in its pristine purity. The minds of the people there are filled with immense faith and deep gratitude towards Emperor Ashoka, from whom they received Dhamma. Therefore, the householders and bhikkhus of Myanmar chant this verse in the early morning:

*Yathā rakkehiṃsu porāṇā, surājāno tathevimaṃ,
Rājā rakkebatu dhammena, attanova pajam pajam.*

The ancient kings protected their subjects just as a father would take care of his children. Similarly, may our king protect his subjects like his own children.

They are clearly referring to Emperor Ashoka because for them, Emperor Ashoka was an exemplary king. Just as the righteous reign of King Rama is praised in India, Emperor Ashoka's rule is praised in those countries.

Emperor Ashoka's love for his subjects is clearly described in his stone carvings:

Devānampiyō Piyadassī rājā yaso va kīti va na mahāthāvaha maññate aññata tadātpano dīghāya ca me jano dhammasusruṃsatā dhammavutaṃ ca anuvīdhiyatā.

King Devānampiya Piyadassi does not consider fame or recognition as a great achievement. Instead, his subjects should be eager to listen to Dhamma talks and to practise Dhamma now and in the future. This alone is his goal.

Girnar Silā Dashama Abbilekha

Emperor Ashoka gave the following orders to his ministers:

Sa hevaṃ kaṭṭu kamme calitaviye asvāsaniyā ca te enate pāpuneyu athāpita hevaṃ ne lājā ti atha atānaṃ anukampati hevaṃ apheni anukampati atha pajā hevaṃ maye lājine.

While practising the Dhamma, you (ministers) have to perform your duties and give assurance to the subjects so that they always feel that the king is like a father to them. They should feel that the king protects them just as a father protects his children.

Jaugadh Silā dvithiya prithak abbilekha

Emperor Ashoka criticized sectarianism in these words:

Yo hi koci ātpapāsandaṃ pūjayati parapāsandaṃ va garabati savaṃ ātpapāsandaḥbhātiyā kiṃti ātpapāsandaṃ dīpayema iti so ca puna tatha karoto ātpapāsanda bādātaraṃ upabanāti.

Someone who honours his own religion and condemns other religions may do so out of devotion to his religion, thinking, "I will glorify my religion," but his actions injure his own religion more gravely.

Girnar Silā dvādasha abbilekha

Therefore, there were no sectarian conflicts within Emperor Ashoka's territory. Peace and harmony prevailed among his subjects. The people of the neighbouring countries recall this and have deep gratitude and respect towards India and towards Emperor Ashoka, who sent the Buddha's teaching from India. The deep love and respect of the subjects of those countries towards Emperor Ashoka can be illustrated by this example:

Myanmar is a country with more women than men. When a girl is born in any household in that country, there is great celebration. This is because after marriage, the daughter does not leave the household to go to the house of her in-laws. Instead the son-in-law comes to stay at the bride's house. However, every woman wishes to give birth to a son, whom she can adorn like a prince and entrust to the Saṅgha just as Emperor Ashoka entrusted his son Mahinda to the Saṅgha. Whenever any couple entrust their son to the Saṅgha,

they adorn him like a prince, mount him on a horse, and take him in a ceremonial procession to the monastery where he is to be ordained as a monk. The people of the villages and town help those parents who are poor to arrange this ceremonial farewell. Usually, the children are ordained only for a short period. However, some continue as monks for their whole life. Thus, the people of Myanmar have kept alive this tradition which dates back almost 2,200 years.

The pagodas constructed in those countries remind people of the Buddha, his beneficent teachings, and the king who sent the teachings to neighbouring countries. The pagodas thus help people to generate faith and gratitude towards their benefactors. Similarly, the Global Vipassana Pagoda will remain a monument to express our gratitude towards Sayagyi U Ba Khin.

Re-Establishment of Dhamma

India lost the Buddha's teaching, the Tipitaka as well as its commentaries and sub-commentaries. It also lost the technique of Vipassana. Even the word "Vipassana" was lost in all the Indian languages. The people of India remained deprived of the benefits of the Buddha's teachings. Then a Dhamma volition arose in the mind of Sayagyi U Ba Khin. He felt greatly indebted to India for sending this invaluable gem of Dhamma to other countries. India had later lost it. Sayagyi wanted to repay Myanmar's debt. Therefore, he returned both these gems to India through his Dhamma son. As a result, after a gap of almost 2,000 years, in 1969 the first Vipassana course in modern times was held in India in the city of Mumbai.

The original texts of the Buddha and all the related Pali literature were published here in Devanagari script. The entire Pali literature was published on CD-ROM in various scripts and also made available on the Internet, free of charge.

The teachings of the Buddha and the technique of Vipassana were preserved by Myanmar. Therefore, India as well as people around the world will remain grateful towards Myanmar for centuries. The Global Vipassana Pagoda as well as all other pagodas will remind the Indian people of the debt of gratitude to Myanmar and Sayagyi U Ba Khin.

Soon, many Vipassana meditators from India and around the world will go on pilgrimage to Myanmar and meditate at Shwedagon and the meditation centres of Sayagyi U Ba Khin, Saya Thet gyi, and Ledi Sayadaw.

For centuries, people will meditate in the Global Pagoda and in pagodas around the world. People of all religions, races, castes, and nationalities will sit together and meditate in these pagodas in a spirit of universal fellowship.

Gratitude is a very important aspect of Dhamma. May everyone understand its value and the importance of the Global Pagoda. May all be happy. May the whole world benefit from the technique of Vipassana! ☸

Pilgrimage to the Buddha Sacred Sites

IRCTC, the tourism arm of Indian Railways, has started a fully air-conditioned special train, the Mahaparinirvana Express, touring the Buddha Sacred Sites (Lumbini, Bodhgaya, Sarnath, Sravasti, Rajgir and Kushinagar). This is a good opportunity for Vipassana meditators to visit these sites without bothering about organizing multiple ticketing, local transport at different destinations and hotel stay.

Global Vipassana Foundation (GVF) has negotiated a special discount of 21% with IRCTC for the benefit of Vipassana meditators.

IRCTC and GVF have agreed to include two sessions of group meditation for meditators under the Bodhi tree in the Mahabodhi temple at Bodhi Gaya and at Kushinagar, subject to the number of such meditators being not less than ten. The group sittings will be after visiting hours of the Mahabodhi temple so as to provide a quiet environment for meditation.

Schedule (starts and ends at Delhi)

	Starting Date	Ending Date
Mar 2010	6 and 20	13 and 27

8-day tour full fare (infants free, children 5-12 yrs 50%)

Class	Rack Rate		21% Discount	
	Rs	USD	Rs	USD
First AC Coupe	53270	1150	42083	908
First AC	48650	1050	38433	830
2 Tier AC	41650	875	32903	692
3 Tier AC	34650	735	27373	581

For registration, contact: Mr. Izhar Alam, Mobile: [91] 98913-73549 or Mr. Arun Srivastava, IRCTC, Ground Floor, STC Building, 1-Tolstoy Marg, New Delhi 110001.

Tel: [91] 2370-1100, 2370-1101, 97176-40452.

Email: arunsrivastava@irctc.com,

buddhisttrain@irctc.com

Website: www.railtourismindia.com/buddha

Workshop on Edicts of Emperor Ashoka

A seven-day workshop on *Samrat Ashok ke Abhilekh* (Edicts of Emperor Ashok) has been arranged at Jaipur from 8 to 16 August, 2010 (11 am), including a visit to Bairath. **Venue:** Kothari Farms (Marugandha), 2 kms off Jaipur-Ajmer Express Highway, On Bhankrota-Jaisinghpura Road, Bhankrota, Jaipur. The workshop is for Hindi-speaking Vipassana meditators from India and Nepal and is open to men and women. **Registration:** Mr. Anil Mehta, Mobile: 96104-01401, Email: paliworkshop@yahoo.co.in.

Pali Workshop at Bhuj

A ten-day Pali workshop has been arranged from 19 to 30 November 2010, only for English-speaking non-Indian Vipassana meditators. **Venue:** Dhanvantari School, Pramukh Swami Char Rasta, Mundra Relocation Site, Bhuj 370 001, Kutch. **Contact:** Dr. (Ms.) Shantuben Patel, Mobile: [91] 98256-62156, Tel: (02832) 291-366. Email: shantubhenpatel@gmail.com

Pali Workshop in Madhya Pradesh

A seven-day Pali workshop has been arranged from 27 May to 4 June 2010 for Hindi-speaking Vipassana meditators. **Venue:** Shri Rawatpura Sarkar Institutions (SRI), Kalapuram, NH-75, Jhansi Road, Datia 475 661, Madhya Pradesh.

Contact: Shri Naresh Kumar Agarwal, Shanti Niketan Hostel, Near Bharat Petroleum Pump, Shivaji Nagar, Kanpur Road, Jhansi, U.P. Mobile: 99355-99453, 90057-74504. Email: shanti.globaldhamma@gmail.com

Subscription to GVF SMS Message Centre

Global Vipassana Foundation (GVF) has created a SMS Message Centre to send timely announcements about Vipassana to meditators via SMS.

To receive these SMS announcements, meditators will have to subscribe by sending an SMS from his/her mobile phone to 575758. Type 'Vipassana' 'First Name' 'Last Name' 'City' 'Email id' 'Number of courses'.

An example of your SMS if you have an email id: *Vipassana Gautam, Parekh, Mumbai, gparekh@xyz.com, 14*, (NB Providing email will allow GVF to send Patrika/Newsletter via email in future.)

An example of your SMS if you don't have an email id: *Vipassana Gautam, Parekh, Mumbai, 14*,

1. GVF SMS Message Centre is for old students only and is only for sending SMS to meditators. The Message Center cannot receive SMS from meditators. The cost of subscribing to SMS Message Center is a one-time charge of Rs 3.

2. If you wish to unsubscribe from the GVF SMS Message Center, kindly send SMS to 575758 with the following message "Stop Vipassana" For unsubscribing there will be one-time charge of Rs 3.

3. Meditators will not be charged for receiving SMS sent by GVF SMS Message Center.

4. Upon successfully subscription, you will receive the following message "Thank you for registering with Global Vipassana Foundation (GVF) SMS Message Centre. May All Be Happy"

125% Income-Tax Exemption U/s 35 (1) (iii) of I.T. Act 1961, Granted for Donations made to VRI

The Ministry of Finance, Government of India, has granted Vipassana Research Institute the above mentioned income-tax exemption on a long-term (permanent) basis, valid from the Assessment Year 2006-07 onwards (till further action, if any), vide its Notification No. 71/2009 dated 25.09.2009 (F. No. 203/13/2008/ITA-II).

So meditators can now claim the income-tax exemptions due towards their donations made to VRI during the period from Financial Year 1991-92, when VRI was initially granted the said exemption, to date and beyond too.

Goenkaji's Discourses on Television

Goenkaji's discourses are telecast daily on Bindass TV from 4.45 am to 6 am.

(Please confirm exact telecast timings.)

Children's Courses in Mumbai

Date	Venue	Age	Language	Registration
21-3	Ghatkopar	10-16 yrs	Hindi	18 & 19-3
18-4	Ghatkopar	10-16 yrs	Hindi	15 & 16-4
18-4	Goregaon	9-16 yrs	Hindi	15 & 16-4
2-5	S. Mumbai	13-18 yrs	Hindi	29 & 30-4
9-5	Ulhasnagar	9-16 yrs	Hindi	6 & 7-5
16-5	Ghatkopar	10-16 yrs	Hindi	13 & 14-5
6-6	S. Mumbai	9-16 yrs	English	3 & 4-6
20-6	Ghatkopar	10-16 yrs	Hindi	17 & 18-6
20-6	Goregaon	9-16 yrs	Hindi	17 & 18-6
22-8	Goregaon	9-16 yrs	Hindi	19 & 20-8
24-10	Goregaon	9-16 yrs	Hindi	21 & 22-10
19-12	Goregaon	9-16 yrs	Hindi	16 & 17-12

Residential courses at Titwala. Contact: Tel: 2501-1096, 2516-2505

16 to 18-4	for girls	13-16 yrs	Hindi	4 to 10-4
23 to 25-4	for boys	13-16 yrs	Hindi	11 to 17-4

Course Timings: 8:30 am to 2:30 pm. **Registration:** 11 am to 1 pm
Course Venues: **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. **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

Ācaryas:

Dr. (Ms.) Wilaiwan Sitasuwan, *Thailand*
 To assist area teachers in serving Dhamma Kamala

Senior Assistant Teachers

1. Mrs. Pornphen Leenutapong, *Thailand*
2. Mrs. Patra Patrabutra, *Thailand*

NEW APPOINTMENTS

Assistant Teachers:

1. Ms. Kimiko Ouchi, *Japan*
2. Mr. Ole Bosch, *South Africa*
3. & 4. Mr. Eric Balans & Mrs. Alexandra (Xana) Gil, *Portugal*
5. Ms. Katayoun Eslah, *Canada*
6. & 7. Mr. Ireneusz (Eric) & Mrs. Ania Sroka, *Canada*
8. Mr. Zachary Holder & Mrs. Dana Kimbell, *USA*

Children's Course Teachers:

1. Mr. Anant Waman Khadilkar, *Raigad*
2. Mr. Gimidi Bhasker Khamam, *A.P.*
3. Mr. Murali Nelakanti Ranga Reddy, *A.P.*
4. Mr. Paloju Srinivasulu Ranga Reddy, *A.P.*
5. Mrs. N. Lavanya Kumari Guntur, *A.P.*
6. Mr. Mangukia Vallabhbai, *Amdavad*
7. Mr. Rajesh Gandhi, *Amdavad*
8. Mr. Ashish Pradhan, *Pune*

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DHAMMA DOHAS

Sānsa dekhate dekhate, mana avicala ho jāya;
Avicala mana niramala bane, sabaja mukta ho jāya.
 Observing breath after breath, the mind becomes still;
 Unwavering, the mind becomes pure
 and naturally finds liberation.

Pala pala kṣaṇa kṣaṇa hoṣa rakha, apanā karma sudhāra;
Sukha se jine kī kalā, apanī ora nibāra.
 Moment by moment keep your sanity,
 rectify your own actions;
 This is the art of living happily by observing yourself.

With much mettā,
 A Vipassana meditator

Kṣaṇa kṣaṇa pratikṣaṇa sajaḡa raba, apanā hoṣa sambhāla;
Rāga dveṣa kī pratikriyā, tāla sake to tāla.
 Moment by moment remain alert, guard your sanity;
 Strive to avoid the reactions of craving and aversion.

Sānsa dekhate dekhate, satya prakāṭatā jāya;
Satya dekhate dekhate, parama satya dikha jāya.
 As you observe breath after breath the truth reveals itself;
 Observing truth after truth, you come to ultimate truth.

With best compliments from
MOTILAL BANARSIDASS

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 LIFE SUBSCRIPTION: RS 500 (US\$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
 28 February 2010 Posted at Igatpuri, Dist. Nashik Posting Day: Purnima of every month

LICENSED TO POST WITHOUT PREPAYMENT OF POSTAGE - WPP POSTAL LICENCE NUMBER – AR/TECHNO/WPP-04/2009-2011
 REGISTERED NO. NSK/39/2009-2011

PRINTED MATTER

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