



WORDS OF DHAMMA

**Pamādaṃ appamādena, yadā nudati paṇḍito;
Paññāpāsādamāruyha, asoko sokiniṃ; pajam;
Pabbataṭṭhova bhūmaṭṭhe, dhīro bāle avekkhati.**

When a wise person drives out heedlessness with heedfulness, having reached the pinnacle of wisdom this sorrow free sage, an enlightened one, sees the sorrowing crowd as the ignorant sorrowing folk on the ground below.

— Dhammapada 28, Appamādavagga

Dhamma talk to Old Students – Dhammavimutti, Kushinagar (U.P.)

My Dear Vipassana meditators!

Today we have gathered at a place where a very long journey, a very long journey indeed, came to an end for one who was a giant among men. Uncountable *kappas* (eons) ago, this man, a Brahmin by the name of Sumedha lived as a *tapas* (renunciate) during the time of a Fully Enlightened One – Sammā Sambuddha Dīpankara.

Upon coming in contact with this Great One, an immensely powerful Dhamma volition arose in this *tapasvi's* heart, “If I too become fully self enlightened, as Sammā Sambuddha Dīpankara did, then I too will be able to help so many others.” There are many who, upon seeing a Fully Enlightened One, develop the inspiration to become like him and help the multitudes. With this potent thought arising, Sumedha approached Dīpankara Buddha and expressed his wish.

Sammā Sambuddha Dīpankara then looked with his inner eye of Dhamma to see whether or not this man was truly ripe for this extraordinary undertaking. If he found that a person was not ready, he would merely smile. But if the person was worthy of such an immense venture, he would then examine what manner of worthiness he possessed. Firstly he would examine how deep the resolve of the one making the request was – whether he had a stable, unshakable volition to serve others, or whether it was merely a momentary outburst emanating from this present environ, which would quickly disappear once this situation changed. Secondly, he would examine the person's worthiness – whether he had fulfilled *pāramīs* over innumerable lifetimes. And if he had, whether he had fulfilled sufficient *pāramīs* to achieve final liberation and become an Arahant, if the Buddha were to teach him Vipassana right there and then.

Having examined these aspects, Dīpankara Buddha then saw Sumedha's future; that this man was capable of getting liberated there and then, and yet was asking to become a Sammā Sambuddha, knowing fully well that in order to achieve that goal, he would have to work over uncountable lifetimes fulfilling the same *pāramīs* in infinitely larger volumes. Knowing that fulfilling *pāramīs* in such magnitude takes a very long time, Dīpankara Buddha had to judge whether this man possessed this level of a sense of sacrifice.

He who has reached this far knows fully well that he can achieve total liberation today by the Buddha's teachings, yet he rejects that potential Nibbāna contemplating, “What is the point of merely my own liberation? Just as this Enlightened One served so many over innumerable lifetimes as a Bodhisatta, thereby increasing his *pāramīs*, I too can work over many

lifetimes multiplying my *pāramīs*, even if that means bearing immense difficulties, and finally reach that state where I too can become a Sammā Sambuddha.”

Incomparable Service to Humanity

This deep sense of sacrifice is manifest when one relinquishes Nibbāna which is easily within reach, while expressing total readiness to bear immense hardships in order to help many suffering beings. Buddha Dīpankara could see that this brahmin was totally worthy. He then looked to his future to see how much time it would take for him to ripen to become a Sammā Sambuddha.

Then blessing Sumedha, he proclaimed that after so many *kappas*, Sumedha would be born from the womb of Queen Mahāmaya in the household of King Suddhodana in Kapilavatthu, bearing such and such name, and he would become a Sammā Sambuddha.

From that time on, this man kept taking birth, life after life, from this womb to that womb. How many lifetimes it took to turn the attention of those he came in contact with in that particular life towards Dhamma, or to kindle the flame and to raise his own levels of *pāramīs* is impossible to count. In due course he was born by the name of Siddhartha Gotama. Those who saw the auspicious signs on his body, proclaimed that when this child attained adulthood, if he were to remain a householder then he would become a victorious emperor, but if he were to renounce the world, then he would become a Sammā Sambuddha.

The Bodhisatta achieved the final goal of full liberation sitting under the bodhi tree in Bodh Gaya. In the intervening lifetimes he had immersed himself in the unceasing service of others; and now, having left home at the age of 29, he became Buddha after 6 years. The subsequent 45 years were again dedicated to serving others, day and night. For one period of the night he would lie down fully aware with wisdom, while the rest of the time was given to serving others. He continued serving in this way with utmost compassion until his *Mahāparinibbāna* in this very place.

Four Stages of Nibbāna

Nibbāna is that state where the senses cease to function. This state is achieved with the practice of Vipassana. The very first nibbanic state is experienced when all those defilements that lead us towards the lower levels of existence are dissolved. After experiencing this state, called *Sotāpanna*, the doors leading to the lower realms are forever closed. One will take birth again seven times at the most, no more, though the number may be less. Then as one progresses, one becomes a *Sakadaḡāmi*. After experiencing this state, one will take only one more birth in the sensual world, either in the human realm or in a deva loka. Progressing further one will become an *Anāgāmi* – now one will not return to the sensual world, but be born in a *brahmā loka* –

and then moving forward, will become an *Arahant*, free from all *lokas* forever.

As Sammā Sambuddha, these four stages are achieved one after the other. Total liberation, or the final Nibbāna for the Sammā Sambuddha still remains and until then this state is called *Saupādisesa-nibbāna* – meaning *upādhi: saṅkhāra* persists which will carry forward the burden of this body in order for the Sammā Sambuddha to live out this life, though these *saṅkhāra* are not enough to give him another birth. When this life ends, he will not take birth again. It is then *Anupādisesa-nibbāna* – there is no *upādhi*, no birth ever. It is the state of *Parinibbāna*, total liberation. Here is that place where this Enlightened One's *Mahāparinibbāna* took place.

How suffused with compassion he was. He was suffused with compassion in all preceeding lives as a Bodhisatta, and even now in this final life also. How else could it have been possible for him to serve others so continuously. The time for his *Mahāparinibbāna* was drawing close. He had made an announcement three months earlier while in Vesālī, that in the coming full moon night of the month of *Vesākha*, he would leave his body.

He walked all the way to this place, Kushinagar. On route, on the previous day, a householder by the name of Cunda gave *dāna* of a meal which contained mushrooms of a kind that were poisonous. Though the Buddha ate them himself, he prevented the bhikkhus from consuming them. He was now moving towards *Parinibbāna*, but compassion flowed in the heart for Cunda, "Others must not censure him after I am gone. They must not malign Cunda asking him how he could give such a meal to the Compassionate One." He told Ānanda that after he was gone he must go to Cunda and explain to him that he had truly gained much merit.

The food that is offered to the Bodhisatta on the night prior to his becoming the Buddha is immensely meritorious. This merit belonged to Sujātā. The last meal too is equally meritorious. After moving from birth to birth through uncountable lifetimes, this wheel was now coming to an end. Cunda must not be struck by remorse. Further, he told Ānanda to see that others too did not speak ill of Cunda. How much compassion the Bodhisatta had! How much indeed!

Moving towards a twin sal tree he told Ānanda he would lie down there. He explained that as dawn came, the Tathāgata's *Parinibbāna* would take place. This place happened to be near the kingdom of the Mallās and he realised that the Mallās would be distraught when they found out that the Buddha had come so close to their kingdom before his *Mahāparinibbāna*, wishing that they had at least had an opportunity to pay their last respects. Hence he advised Ānanda to go and inform them. Ānanda went and made an announcement that Lord Buddha's *Mahāparinibbāna* would take place at the rise of dawn.

People began to flock to that place to pay their final respects. Upon seeing this, Ānanda requested them to come, pay their respects and then move on as there wasn't much time. Then came a recluse by the name of Subhadda. He said, "I have not come to merely pay my respects, I want to learn the teachings from him. Who knows whether you will be able to teach it to me properly afterwards." Ānanda replied, "This is his time of passing away, please do not trouble him, let him go in peace."

But Subhadda was adamant saying he must learn Dhamma from the Lord. Ānanda again responded telling him that if he wanted to pay his respects he could do so, but otherwise to let others come forward. The Lord listened to this exchange thinking, "A thirsty one has come to the river Ganges, and another one is stopping him saying he cannot drink water, just fold his hands and leave." Then the Ganges of compassion arose in him and started flowing – "O Ānanda, do not stop him. He is a worthy one. Let me teach him Dhamma." And he taught him. Boundless compassion flowed from him to serve one more even

as it was time to pass away. This is indeed the hallmark of such a Rare One.

There were other events of importance that took place in Kushinagar. Someone once asked the Buddha, "Respected Sir, who will be your successor once you are gone?" The Tathāgata replied, "The Dhamma will. The Dhamma that I have taught you will be your teacher, your guru."

He further explained that if one person is made the successor, then a commercial priesthood will take over. Until the time that a person attains the higher states of meditation, he is likely to get drunk on power once it comes in his hands thinking, "Now I am presiding over the congregation of the Buddha, sitting on his seat, and I deserve to be venerated in the same manner." This power-filled intoxication becomes the cause of the downfall of Dhamma. Hence there is no single person who will be the successor, but Dhamma alone will be the successor. Those who follow Dhamma will benefit themselves. If you have understood Dhamma well what else do you need?

Another episode that occurred in those times was at the time of the *Parinibbāna* of the Buddha. His chief disciple, Mahā Kassapa, was on his way to Kushinagar with his 500 disciples. It was going to take another seven days for them to reach there, and until that time the Buddha's physical remains were to be preserved. Among Mahā Kassapa's disciples there was one by the name of Subhadda who was very old in age, but very immature in Dhamma. When he heard of the Tathāgata's passing away he jumped with joy exclaiming, "O wonderful the old man is gone! He was so troublesome, so bothersome with his rules stating do this, don't do that. Now that he is gone we are free to do what we want. No one can interfere." Hearing this, Mahā Kassapa became concerned thinking, "Yes, certainly there are ripe, matured people in the saṅgha, but there are also foolish ones like Subhadda. Now that the Lord has passed away, such people will twist his words to suit their own purposes. They will claim the Buddha said something that he may not have said, or not talk about some things that he did say, thus contriving to put in his mouth what they desire. They will make efforts to remove what is undesirable to them by saying the Buddha did not say so. Such people will then be the cause of the Dhamma's downfall. What shall be done?" The wise old Mahā Kassapa mused and then concluded that all the spoken words of the Buddha must be gathered and compiled together.

After seven days, once Mahā Kassapa arrived, the cremation took place and other rituals were performed.

Three months later, at the Sattapanni cave in Rajgir, the very first Saṅgāyana took place. Five hundred Arahant bhikkhus who were very close to the Buddha gathered together, narrated and compiled the words of the Buddha with utmost care. The teachings regarding Vinaya, the rules and regulations for the bhikkhus, was well absorbed and digested by Upālī, a senior teacher of the bhikkhus, and he narrated the words that had come as guidance from the Buddha. This was accepted by all. The rest of the words and teachings were well known to Ānanda, which he recounted and this too was accepted by everyone.

This event was a huge undertaking. In those days neither paper nor printing presses existed. This being such a large body of literature, it was not a small matter for people to memorise it in order to preserve it. And what's more, preserve it while carefully retaining its authenticity, the pristine purity of what was said, so there could be no argument regarding what was genuinely said.

So they came together on one common point of agreement saying that these were the authentic, proven words of the Buddha which no one should add anything to or remove anything from.

This was the first Saṅgāyana. It kept Dhamma alive, giving birth to the tradition whereby the second and then the third, fourth and fifth Saṅgāyana's were held. Then, 2500 years after the Buddha's time, the sixth Saṅgāyana was held in Burma. At this time, wherever in the world the words of the Buddha, the

Tipiṭaka existed – and they existed only in the five countries of Burma, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Cambodia and Laos – from these countries 2500 scholarly bhikkhus were invited to review and recite together the Buddha’s words. The opinions of all had to be one, this was important, in fact a necessary condition.

May all beings be happy!

Discourse for old meditators, during Dhamma-Yatra, trip to Kushinagar...

To be continued...

Sāḍhanā and Buddha Jayanti

(Correspondence between Goenkaji and Meditators – April 9, 1977)

My Dear Ishwarchandra,
My good wishes to you.

I received your letter dated 30th March. I was pleased to hear that you are making full efforts to keep up the practice of Vipassana meditation, and participating in Sunday group sittings which give you peace and joy.

It is certainly true that in a householder’s life, many ups and downs pose obstructions in the process of developing in Vipassana. Though this is how it seems to appear, yet, one has to struggle against them and not get overwhelmed, as these obstructions, in reality exist, but to strengthen our sāḍhanā. It is not advisable to be apprehensive of a householder’s life.

There is no doubt that when a person renounces home and sheds the responsibilities of a householder he gets more time to go deep within and practice meditation; thus many difficulties which may otherwise persist as a householder are avoided.

However, in a society where Dhamma has not permeated amongst the householders, it is not easy to become a renunciate and work towards one’s true welfare. The difficulties in such situations are also numerous, so nothing wrong to work towards growing in Dhamma even as one remains a householder.

There is no magic-wand that instantly stops the generation of new saṅkhārās; the entire path is such that it takes us gradually to the point where we may get few moments free of new saṅkhārās. These moments are immensely beneficial as they help in the dissolution of large accumulations of old saṅkhārās.

A person should remain practical in worldly affairs. If owing to some difficulty or a person’s wrong behaviour, our sense of safety and security is shaken up, it is necessary to maintain forbearance at least to some degree. Subsequently, a time may come when one may need to confront injustice and wrongful behaviour without falling prey to emotional reactivity; without generating anger even towards the perpetrator and maintaining good will towards him too. I trust that despite difficulties, the meditators will continue to grow in Dhamma. Your success is inevitable.

May every struggle strengthen your progress in Dhamma, may every defeat inspire you to progress step by each step with doubled enthusiasm and determination. Whenever we resolve to walk on the path of Dhamma, then the infinite energies of Dhamma are drawn to us powerfully, assisting us, helping us. This is certainly true.

It is good that the meditators want to celebrate Buddha Anniversary with much fanfare there, and if anyone wants to sit a self course, then there is no better way to celebrate it. Buddha Anniversary is to acknowledge his greatness, to pay respect and to venerate him, and this is how he is best worshipped – *Imāya dhammānudhammapaṭipattiyaṃ buddhaṃ pūjemi*.

By walking on the path of Dhamma, we pay our respect to him, we pay obeisance to him, thus truly celebrating the day. All those who are participating on this occasion, to them I would like to say that, like other festivals, this occasion should not turn into a carnival of feasts, it should not remain limited to speeches and intellectual debates; rather people should feel inspired to become more and more firmly established in sīla, samādhī and paññā. Then the significance of the Buddha Anniversary is truly realized.

With all my Metta and Blessings,
Kalyāna-mitta,
Satyanarayana Goenka

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Dhammic Deaths

Centre teacher of the Lucknow Vipassana Centre, Shri R. D. Tiwari died peacefully on 19th March 2017. At the ripe age of 90 years, he was fully active and carried out his own tasks while staying at the centre. He had been a freedom fighter and as a senior Superintendent of police, he was honored with the President Award. He came in contact with Vipassana after retirement never to turn back. His wife joined him and both were appointed teachers. Respected Goenkaji gave him the responsibility of the Lucknow Centre where he worked with total sincerity.

A course was to start on the day of his passing and at about 10 am, he was going through the forms of the meditators, even though he felt a little indisposed. By the time any trustee could reach him he breathed his last peacefully, sitting in his chair. The Vipassana family shines brighter with such a dedicated meditator, it pays respect to him.

Senior Assistant Teacher, Shri Govardhan Das Kela from Nagpur passed away peacefully on 16th March, 2017 at the age of 95 years. He came in contact with Vipassana in 1969 making major contributions in the initial years of its establishment; he organized the first Vipassana camp in Nagpur. In 1999, he was appointed senior assistant teacher, serving sincerely till the end. The Vipassana family wishes all the best to the departed.

Vipassana Counselling & Research Centre, Mumbai

VCRC-Mumbai is serving as the in-house Vipassana Resource Centre of Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai, and is managed by MCGM in collaboration with Vipassana Research Institute, at the site of Department of Psychological Medicine, Siddharth Municipal General Hospital, Shastri Nagar, Goregaon (W), Mumbai-400104. [Tel: 28766885 Ext. 219; Time: 12pm-1pm]

The Services being offered currently are:

[A] For Vipassana Meditators:

- (1) **“Practice by Oneself”** on Working Days: 9am-1pm; (2) **“1-Hr Group Sitting”** on Second & Fourth Sundays: 8.30am-9.30am; (3) **“1-Day Course”** on First Sundays: 10.30am-5.30pm;

[B] “Mini-Anapana Course for All” on Second Sundays: 9.30am-10.30am; **[C] “1-Day Anapana Course for Children”** on Third Sundays: 8.30am-2.30pm; **[D] “Meeting of Dhamma Volunteers”** on Fourth Sundays: **9.30am-10.30am.**

Newly Appointed Senior Assistant Teacher

1. Shri Lakshman Das Dadhichi, Uttaranchal
2. Smt. Seema Sharma, New Delhi
3. Shri Rampal Singh Chauhan, Haryana
4. Shri Mahesh Kumar Gupta, Ghaziabad
5. Mrs. Chintha Samaranyake, Sri Lanka

Newly Appointed Assistant Teachers

1. Mr. Jitubhai Shah, Surat
2. Mr. Vijay Gaikwad, Pune
3. Ms. Anju Golecha, Secunderabva

4. Shri. Niranjan Sinha, Jharkhand
5. Shri Prakashchandra Jhunjhunwalla, Akola
6. U Aung Kyaw Nyan Wai, Myanmar
7. Daw Win Win Khaing, Myanmar

Newly Appointed Bhikkhu / Bhikkhuni Teachers

1. Ven. Bhikkhu Pannaratan, Nanded

Children course teachers

1. Mr. Yashwant Kapdi Goa
2. Dr Simon Melvin Das Chagas E Silva Goa
3. Mrs. Bernadette D'Souza Goa
4. Mr Vishnu Sarvagod Pune
5. Mr Kanchan Kharat Pune

Basic Diploma & Advanced Diploma Courses on the teachings of the Buddha, Vipassana theory and practice.

Vipassana Research Institute (VRI) and Mumbai University jointly conduct this Diploma course on theoretical and practical aspects of the Buddha’s teachings, and practical application of Vipassana in various fields. **Application form** available from **3rd July to 8th July, 2017** between 11am to 2pm at Philosophy Department, Jnaneshwar Bhavan, Mumbai University, Kalina, Santaacruz (E). Mumbai - 400098. Tel 022-26527337. Duration of course is from 15th July, 2017, till March end 2018. Classes- every Saturday 2:30 to 6:30 pm. **Eligibility:** Min. 12th pass. It will be compulsory to sit a Vipassana course by the end of first term. **For more information contact:** 1) VRI office 022-62427560 (9:30am- 5:30pm), 2) Mrs. Alka Vengurlekar - 09820583440, 3) Mrs. Archana Deshpande – 9869007040

Short Course in 'Introduction to Vipassana' at V.R.I.-Gorai Under Mumbai University affiliation. Classes once a week for 3 hours. Duration: 3rd June to 19th August 2017. Eligibility: Old SSC/ HSC. For admission details : <http://www.vridhamma.org/Theory-And-Practice-Courses>

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Residential Accommodation in Global Pagoda for Dhamma Servers and Meditators

One Day Mega Courses are held in Global Pagoda, Gorai, Mumbai every year. People at times come from far off places to participate but are constrained as there are no residential quarters for overnight stay. Hence a 3-4 storey free residential accommodation building is being planned where servers who are staying on premises and the meditators arriving in from far may stay in rooms/dormitories which will either be on sharing or single occupancy basis. This will help meditators rest well and begin their 1-day course meditation the next morning on a fresh note. Anyone wanting to participate in this noble project may **Contact:** 1. Mr. Derik Pegado: 9921227057. or 2: Shri Vipin Mehta: 9920052156, Email: audits@globalpagoda.org

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Children's Meditation Courses in Mumbai

Date:

16-4, 21-5, 18-6,

Place:

Goregaon

(Age 10 to 16 Only) Registration before Course Thursday and Friday

Date	Course site	Age (years)	Registration
First Sunday	Ulhasnagar	10-16	2 days before Course
First Sunday	Wadala	10-16	2 days before Course
First Sunday	Khar	10-16	2 days before Course
Second Sunday	Dombivili	10-16	2 days before Course
Second Sunday	Andheri	10-16	2 days before Course
Third Sunday	Ghatkopar	10-16	2 days before Course
Fourth Sunday	Airoli	10-16	2 days before Course
Fourth Sunday	Kalyan	10-16	2 days before Course

"Please call or send a text sms message with the name & age of the child two days in advance for registration"

Course Timing: 8:30 am to 2:30 pm. **Registration Timing:** 11 am to 1 pm on the specified numbers and dates for each location. **Course Venues:** **Goregaon:** Vipassana Counselling and Research Centre, Siddharth Municipal General Hospital, Goregaon (W), Mob. 98924-15803, Tel: 2624-2025. **Ulhasnagar:** A Block 703/1405, Gokul Nagar, Behind Netaji School, Near Mahesh Granite, Tel. 9970755130, **Wadala:** "BMC School – Sewri Wadala Estate Road No: 7A Behind Lijjat Papad Building **Contact:** Mobile: 98922-18186, 98201-50336, **Khar:** Mahabodhi Buddha Vihar, Baudha Smashan Bhumi, Carter Rd. Danda, Khar West, Mumbai-52, Mob. 9930962652, 9869281410, **Dombivili:** Tilak School, Tilak Nagar, Dombivili, Mob. 9029423540. **Andheri:** Mayfair Meridian Meditation Hall, Ceaser Road, Off S.V. Road, Amboli, Near St. Blaise Mob. 9967480865, 9967813478. **Ghatkopar:** SNTD School, New Building, Cama Lane, Ghatkopar (W), Opp Vidyut Society, Mumbai 400086. Tel: 25011096, 25162505. Airoli: Dnyandeep School, sector 2, Airoli, Mobile: 9969267720, 9969950901. Kalyan: Krishanrao Dhulup KDM school No. 4, Ram baug lane no 5, Near old Vani Vidyalay. Mob. 9987425633.

Please call two days in advance for registration.

NB *Please bring cushion. *Please register on the specified phone numbers. If unable to attend after registration, please *Inform in advance. *Please arrive on time for the course.

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One-day Mega course schedule at Global Vipassana Pagoda for 2017

Sunday **14 May**, Buddha Purnima; Sunday **9th July**, Ashadha-Purnima (Dharmachakka Pravartan day); Sunday **1st Oct.** in Gratitude of Respected S.N. Goenka (29th Sept.) & 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:** www.oneday.globalpagoda.org.

DHAMMA DOHAS

*Yadi sambuddha na khojate, śuddha dharma kā pantha,
To mīthyā jāñjāla meṇi, hotā jīvana anta.*

Had the Fully Enlightened One not sought the path of Pure Dhamma, Then the life would have ended in futile, useless worldly tasks.

*Yāda karūṇā jaba Buddha kī, karuṇā amita apāra,
Tana-mana pulakīta ho uṭhe, cīta chāye ābhāra.*

Whenever I remember the infinite compassion of the Buddha, Then every pore of my being brims over & the heart is filled with gratitude.

*Yahī Buddha kī vandanā, vinaya namana ābhāra,
Jāge bodha anītya kā, hoveṇ dūra vikāra.*

This is the way to pay obeisance to the Buddha, the hands folded in gratitude & humility; With the rising awareness of Anicca the defilements are eradicated,

*Citta nīpaṭa nirmala rahe, rahūṇ pāpa se dūra,
Yahī Buddha kī vandanā, rahe dharma bharapūra.*

May the mind remain ever pure, may I stay away from defilements, May I be filled with Dhamma, this is the way to pay respect to the Buddha.

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