



WORDS OF DHAMMA

*Caranti bālā dummedhā,
amitteneva attanā;
Karonā pāpakaṃ kammaṃ,
yaṃ hoti kaṭukapphalam*

— Dhammapada- 66, Bala vagga.

Fools, their wisdom weak, are their own enemies, as they go through life doing evil that bears bitter fruit.

What is the Teaching of the Buddha?

(Public Talk 1, Part 1) (23 September 1951)

by Thray Sithu Sayagyi U Ba Khin

(In 1951, when Sayagyi was the Accountant General of Burma, he was requested by a religious study group to lecture on Teachings of the Buddha. The study group was headed by the information officer and the economic and finance officer of the Special Technical and Economic Division of the U.S. Government. Sayagyi presented a series of three lectures in Rangoon (at the Methodist Church, Signal Pagoda Road). The following is abridged.)

My dear Dhamma brothers & Sisters!

I consider it a great privilege to be in your midst today and to have this opportunity of addressing you on the subject of “What is the Teaching of Buddha?” At the outset, I must be very frank with you. I have not been to a university, and I have no knowledge of science except as a man on the street. Nor am I a scholar in the theory of Teachings of the Buddha with any knowledge of the Pāli language in which the *Tiṭṭaka* (known as, literally, the “Three Baskets” of Buddha Dhamma) are maintained. I must say, however, that I have read in Burmese to some extent the treatises of teachings of the Buddha by well-known and learned Buddhist monks. As my approach to Teachings of the Buddha is more by practical than by theoretical means, I hope to be able to give you something of the teachings which is not easily available elsewhere. I must admit, however, that for the time being I am just a student of practical Dhamma and also an experimentalist trying to learn through teachings of the Buddha, the truth of the nature of forces. As this has to be done as a householder and within a limited time available amidst the multifarious duties of a responsible officer of the government, the progress is rather slow, and I do not claim for a moment that what I am going to say is absolutely correct. I may be right or wrong. But when I say a thing, I assure you that it is with sincerity of purpose, with the best of intentions and with conviction.

Lord Buddha said in the *Kāḷāma Sutta*:

Do not believe in what you have heard;
do not believe in the traditions because they have
been handed down for generations;

do not believe in anything because it is rumoured and
spoken by many;

do not believe merely because a written statement of
some old sage is produced;
do not believe in conjectures;
do not believe in that as truth to which you have
become attached by habit;
do not believe merely the authority of your teachers
and elders.

After observation and analysis, when it agrees with reason and is conducive to the good and gain of one and all, then accept it and live up to it.

Pray, do not, therefore, believe me when I come to the philosophical issues until and unless you are convinced of what I say, either as a sequel to proper reasoning or by means of a practical approach.

To abstain from evil; To do good; To purify the mind: These are the teachings of all the Buddhas.

This extract taken from the Dhammapada gives, in brief, the essence of the teachings of the Buddha. It sounds simple but is so difficult to practice. One cannot be a truth unless he puts the doctrine of Buddha into practice. Buddha said:

You, to whom the truths I have perceived have been made known by me, make them surely your own; practice them, meditate upon them, spread them abroad; in order that the pure Dhamma may last long and be perpetuated for the good and the gain and the weal of gods and men.

Before I take up the teachings of Buddha, which form the basic foundation, I propose to acquaint you, first of all, with the life story of Gotama Buddha. For this purpose, I feel it my duty to give you a background of certain concepts of Buddha’s which may be foreign to most of you. I propose, therefore, to give you a short and descriptive explanation of such concepts in Dhamma as to the universe, the world system, the planes of existence, etc. These will no doubt give you some food for thought. I would, however, appeal to you to give a patient hearing and to pass over these matters for the time being, i.e., until we come to the question time for discussion.

Universe

The concept of the universe may be summed up as follows:

There is the *Okāsa Loka* (the universe of space) which accommodates *nāma* and *rūpa* (mind and matter). In this mundane world, it is *nāma* and *rūpa* which predominate under the influence of the law of cause and effect. The next is the *Saṅkhāra Loka* (the universe of mental forces), creative or created. This is a mental plane arising out of the creative energies of mind through the medium of bodily actions, words

and thoughts. The third and the last is the *Satta Loka* (the universe of sentient beings). These beings are the products of mental forces. We may rather call these three as a “three-in-one” universe because one is inseparable from another. They are, so to say, interwoven and interpenetrating.

What will interest you most are the *cakkavālas* or world-systems, each with its thirty-one planes of existence. Each world system corresponds to the human world with its solar system and other planes of existence. There are millions and millions of such world systems, simply innumerable. Ten thousand such world systems closest to us are within the *Jāti-Khetta* (or the field of origin) of a Buddha. In fact when the renowned *Mahāsamaya Sutta* (Great Occasion) was given by Buddha in the forest (*mahāvana*) near the town of Kapilavatthu, not only the *brahmās* and *devas* of our world system, but those of all of the ten thousand world systems were present to listen to the teachings of Buddha. Lord Buddha can also send his thought-waves charged with boundless love and compassion to the sentient beings of a hundred crores (thousand million) of such world systems within the *Āṇā-khetta* (the field of influence). The remainder of the world systems are in the *Visaya-Khetta* (infinite space) beyond the reach of Buddha’s effective thought waves. You can very well imagine from these concepts of Buddha, the size of the universe as a whole. The material insignificance of our world in the *Okāsa-Loka* (universe of space) is simply terrifying. The human world, as a whole, must be just a speck in space.

Now I will give you an idea of the thirty-one planes of existence in our world system which, of course, is the same as in any of the other world systems. Broadly they are:

- (i) *Arūpa Loka* – immaterial world of *brahmās*;
- (ii) *Rūpa Loka* – fine material world of *brahmās*;
- (iii) *Kāma Loka* – sensuous world of *devas*, mankind and lower beings.

The *Arūpa Loka* is comprised of four *brahmā* worlds of immaterial state, i.e., without *rūpa* or matter. The *Rūpa Loka* is comprised of sixteen *brahmā* worlds of fine material state. The *Kāma loka* is comprised of:

- (a) Six *deva lokas* (or celestial worlds), viz.:
 - (i) *Cātummahārājika* (ii) *Tāvatiṃsa*
 - (iii) *Yāmā* (iv) *Tusitā*
 - (v) *Nimmānarati* (vi) *Paranimmīta-vasavattī*
- (b) The human world
- (c) The four lower worlds, viz:
 - (i) *Niraya* (hell)
 - (ii) *Tiracchāna* (animal world)
 - (iii) *Peta* (ghost world)
 - (iv) *Asura* (demon world)

These planes of existence are pure or impure, cool or hot, luminous or dark, light or heavy, pleasant or wretched – according to the character of the mental forces generated by the mind or the volition (*cetanā*) of a series of actions, words and thoughts. For example, take the case of a religious man who suffuses the whole universe of beings with boundless love and compassion. He must be generating such mental forces as are pure, cooling, luminous, light and pleasant – forces which normally settle down in the *brahmā* worlds. Let us now take the reverse case of a man who is dissatisfied or angry. As the saying goes, “The face reflects the mind”: the impurity, heat, darkness, heaviness and wretchedness of his mind are immediately reflected in the person, visible even to the naked eye. This is due, I may say, to the generation of the evil mental forces of *dosa* (anger) which go down to the lower world of existence. The same is the case with the mental forces arising out of *lobha*

(greed) or *moha* (delusion). In the case of meritorious deeds such as devotion, morality and charity which have, at their base, attachment to future well-being, the mental forces generated are those that will normally be located in the sensuous planes of *devas* and of mankind. These ladies and gentlemen are some of the concepts relevant to the life story of Gotama Buddha which I will presently begin.

Preparation

Gotama Buddha is the fourth of the five Buddhas to rise in the world cycle which is known as *bhadda-kappa*. His predecessors were Buddhas Kakusandha, Koṇāgamana and Kassapa. There were also innumerable Buddhas who had arisen in earlier *kappas* (ages) and who had preached the self-same Dhamma which gives deliverance from suffering and death to all matured beings. Buddhas are all compassionate, glorious and enlightened.

A hermit by the name of Sumedha was inspired by Buddha Dīpaṅkara; so much so, that he took the vow to make all the necessary preparations to become a Buddha in the course of time. Buddha Dīpaṅkara gave him his blessings and prophesied that he would become a Buddha by the name of Gotama. From then onwards, existence after existence, the *Bodhisatta*, i.e., Buddha-to-be, conserved mental energies of the highest order through the practice of ten *pāramīs*, or virtues towards perfection, viz.:

1. *Dāna* (virtue in alms-giving), 2. *Sīla* (morality),
3. *Nekkhamma* (renunciation), 4. *Paññā* (wisdom),
5. *Viriya* (perseverance), 6. *Khanti* (forbearance),
7. *Sacca* (truthfulness), 8. *Adhiṭṭhāna* (determination),
9. *Metṭā* (all-embracing love), 10. *Upekkhā* (equanimity)

It is, therefore, a most enduring task to become a Buddha. The utmost strength of will-power is necessary to even think of it. The *Bodhisatta*’s preparatory period came to an end with the life of King Vessantara who excelled any living being in alms-giving. He gave away his kingdom, his wife and his children and all his worldly possessions, for the consummation of his solemn vow taken before the Dīpaṅkara Buddha. The next existence was in *Tusitā* (one of the celestial planes) as glorious Setaketu Deva, until he got his release from that plane and took conception in the womb of Māyā Devi, the Queen of King Suddhodana of Kapilavatthu, a place in present-day Nepal.

When the time was drawing nigh for her confinement, the Queen expressed her desire to go to the place of her own parents for the event. King Suddhodana accordingly sent her there with befitting retinues and guards. On the way, a halt was made at the Lumbinī *sāla* forest. She got down from the palanquin and enjoyed the cool breeze and fragrance of the *sāla* flowers. While holding out her right hand to a branch of the nearby *sāla* tree for a flower, all of a sudden and unexpectedly, she gave birth to a son who was to become the all-enlightened Buddha. Simultaneously, the natural order of things in the cosmos was revolutionized in many respects and thirty-two wonderful phenomena were vivified. All material worlds were shaken from the foundation. There were unusual illuminations in the solar system. All the beings of material planes could see each other. The deaf and dumb were cured. Celestial music was heard everywhere, and so on.

At that moment, Kāḷa Devala, the hermit teacher of King Suddhodana, was having a discourse with celestial beings of *Tāvatiṃsa*. He was a hermit of fame who had mastery of the eight *samāpattis* (attainments) which gave him supernormal powers. Knowing of the birth of a son to the King due to the rejoicing in all the *rūpa* and *kāma* worlds, he hurried back to the palace and desired the baby to be brought before him for

blessings. When the King placed the baby before his teacher for the occasion, Devala at once understood that the baby was no other than the embryo Buddha. He smiled at this knowledge but cried almost immediately thereafter, because he foresaw that he would not live to hear his teachings and that even after his death he would be in the *arūpa brahmā loka* (immaterial plane of *brahmās*) whence he would have no relationship with any of the material planes. He missed the Buddha and his teachings miserably.

On the fifth day, the child was named Siddhattha in the presence of renowned astrologer-palmists who agreed that the child had all the characteristics of a Buddha to come. The Queen, however, died a week after confinement and the child was taken care of by his maternal aunt, Pajāpati Gotamī.

Siddhattha spent his early years of life in ease, luxury and culture. He was acclaimed to be a prodigy both in intellect and strength. The King spared no pains to make the course of his life smooth. Three separate palaces were built to suit three seasons with all the necessities that would make the Prince sink in sensuality. That was because the King, out of paternal affection, desired his son to remain in worldly life as a king rather than as an enlightened Buddha. The King Suddhodana was overly watchful that his son be in such environments as would give him no chance of higher philosophical ideas. In order to make sure that the thought of the Prince never turned in this direction, he ordered that nobody serving him or in his association was ever to speak a single word about such things as old age, sickness or death. They were to act as if there were no unpleasant things in this world. Servants and attendants who showed the least sign of becoming old, weak or sickly were replaced. On the other hand, dancing, music and enjoyable parties were held right through, to keep him under a complete shade of sensuality.

The Great Renunciation

As days, months and years passed, however, the monotony of the sensual surroundings gradually lost hold of the mind of Prince Siddhattha. The mental energies of virtue conserved in all his innumerable earlier lives for the great goal of Buddhahood were automatically aroused. At times, when the world of sensuality lost control over his mind, his inner self worked its way up and raised his mind to a state of purity and tranquillity with the strength of *samādhi*. The war of nerves began.

An escape from sensuality and passion was his first consideration. He wanted to know what existed outside the walls of the palace beyond which he had not even once visited. He wished to see nature as it is, and not as man has made it. Accordingly, he decided to see the royal park, outside the palace walls. On the way to the park, in spite of precautions taken by the King to clear the roads of unpleasant sights, he saw in the very first visit an old man bent with age. Next, he saw a sick person in the agony of a fatal malady. Thereafter he encountered a human corpse. On the last trip, he came across a monk.

All these set his mind to serious thinking. His mental attitude was changed. His mind became clear of impurities and tuned up with the forces of his own virtues conserved in the *Saṅkhāra Loka* (plane of mental forces). By then his mind had become freed from hindrances and was tranquil, pure and strong. It all happened on the night when a son had been born to his queen, a new fetter to bind him down. He was, however, immune from anything which would tend to upset the equilibrium of his mind. The virtues of determination worked their way towards a strong resolve, and he made up his mind to seek the way of escape from birth, old age, suffering and death.

It was midnight when the solemn determination was made. He asked his attendant Channa to keep his stallion Kanthaka ready. After a parting look at his wife and the newly-born babe, Prince Siddhattha broke away from all the ties of family and of the world and made the Great Renunciation. He rode across the town to the river Anomā which he crossed, never to return until his mission had been achieved.

... (To be continued in the next issue)

-- From Sayagyi U Ba Khin Journal



Construction work starting in Dhamma Sugandha near Sangli, Maharashtra

A groundbreaking function (*shilanyasa*) for the Main Dhamma Hall in Dhamma Sugandha, was held on 28th Jan 2018. This new center is coming up at Bhoze, about 20 Km from Miraj railway station in Sangli district. The first phase of construction work of the Main Dhamma Hall for 100 students, 20 double rooms, AT residences, Mini Hall and other infrastructure facilities will start this month. The rest of the construction work will be depending on funds.

Anyone who desires to increase their *pāramīs* by participating in this noble project may contact: Mr. Shital Mulay 9422410436 or Mr. Sunil Chaugule 9403841943. For more information, Bank and other details, visit www.sugandha.dhamma.org; Email: sanglivipassana@gmail.com



Peaceful Passing

Senior Assistant Teacher Sri Shivjibhai Kunvarji Vikamse passed away in Mumbai at a ripe old age on 15th Feb. 2018 with peace and equanimity. He came in contact with Vipassana in 1980 and continued the practice until his death. He served Dhamma in many ways and his family also is doing the same. He was a trustee, then AT in 1997 and SAT in 2001. He encouraged his whole family, and many friends, to practice Vipassana. He always was careful regarding his own health and also helped others including Respected Goenkaji in many ways. The Dhamma family wishes all the best for him in future.



V.R.I. Academic Schedule-2018, Global Pagoda English-Pali Eight week Residential course

Date: 14th July to 11th Sep. 2018.

Please find Eligibility Criteria for Above course on:

<http://www.vridhamma.org/Theory-And-Practice-Courses>.

For more information contact: Mrs. Baljit Lamba: 9833518979, Mrs. Alka Bengurlekar: 9820583440, Mrs Archana Deshpande: 9869007040, VRI office-022-62427560, (9:30 am to 5:00 pm), **E-mail:** mumbai@vridhamma.org



Additional Responsibilities

1. Mr. Arun Anjarkar, To assist Centre Teacher of Dhammalaya, Kolhapur, M.S.
2. Mr. Prakash Laddha, To serve as Center Teacher for Dhamma Nasika, Nashik

Newly Appointed Senior Assistant Teacher

1. Mr. Ramnath Shenoy, Mumbai

Newly Appointed Assistant Teachers

1. Mrs. Rajya Lakshmi Vatrappu, Hyderabad
2. Shri. Amit Sawhney, Noida, Uttar Pradesh (UP)

3. Mrs. Anjali Dhanda, Gurugaoan, Haryana

4. Mr. Ram Niwas Biban, N. Delhi
5. Mrs. Veena Bandari, Hyderabad
6. Mrs. Sandhya Kotadia, Mumbai
7. Mr. Deepu Kizhakkevecttil, Igatpuri

Children course teachers

1. Mrs. Nelakanti Saritha, RR Dist., Telangana
2. Mr. Baburam Yadav, Sravasti, UP
3. Mr. Girdhari Yadav, Gorakhpur, UP
4. Mr. Sachin Kumar, Lucknow, UP
5. Ms. Kiran, -Basti, UP
6. Ms. Renoo Gautam, Faizabad, UP

Children's Meditation Courses in Mumbai

Registration before Course Thursday and Friday.

Other places as under:

Date	Course site
First Sunday	Ulhasnagar, Wadala, Khar
Second Sunday	Dombivili, Andheri
Third Sunday	Ghatkopar, Goregaon
Fourth Sunday	Airoli, Kalyan

(Age 10-16 Registration 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:** SNDT 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 a 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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The Construction of Dhammalaya 2

To give free accommodation to Dhamma Sevakas and meditators who come here for a one-day course from far-off places Dhammalaya-2 will be constructed soon. Those who want to earn merit by contributing to the construction work should **Contact:** 1. Mr. Derik Pegado, 9921227057. or 2. Sri Bipin Mehta, Mo. 9920052156, A/c. Office: 022-62427512/62427510 (9:30AM—5:30PM) **Email:** audits@globalpagoda.org; Bank Details of VRI- 'Vipassana Research Institute', Axis Bank Ltd., Sonimur Apartments, Timber Estate, Malad (W), Mumbai - 400064, Branch - Malad (W). Bank A/c No. - 911010004132846; IFSC No.- UTIB0000062; Swift code: AXISINBB062

Importance of Lighting a Pagoda

Respected Goenkaji always said that it is of special importance that a Pagoda where relics are kept be well lit throughout the night. This helps maintain the Dhamma atmosphere. Anyone wishing to donate for the lighting of the Global Pagoda in the name of their near and dear ones may do so. The cost per night is Rs. 5000/-. For further information **Contact:** 1. Mr. Derik Pegado, 9921227057. or 2. Sri Bipin Mehta, Mo. 9920052156, Email: audits@globalpagoda.org

One-day Mega course schedule at Global Vipassana Pagoda for 2018

Sunday 29th April, Buddha Purnima; Sunday 29th July, Ashadha-Purnima (Dhammachakka Pravartan day); Sunday 30th September 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 DOHA

*Sammukha Dīpaṅkara khaḍe, jo samyaka sambuddha,
Pāye vimala vipaśyanā, bane mukta ho sūddha.*

Dīpaṅkara, the Fully Enlightened One, stood in front of me. I received Vipassana meditation and became purified and liberated.

*Eka akelā maiṃ tarūṃ, yaha to anucita svārtha,
Auroṃ ko tāre binā, sadhe nahūṃ paramārtha.*

Shall I cross over (the ocean of existence) alone? But this is improper and selfish. Unless I help others cross over, my highest achievement will not be complete.

*Sahaja prāpta hai mukti para, kara dūṃ isakā tyāga,
Aura pāramī joḍa kara, banūṃ Buddha baḍabhāga.*

Liberation has accrued to me naturally, but I should renounce it. Developing more perfections I should become a Fully Enlightened Buddha.

*Jana-jana ke kalyāṇa hita, kaise karuṇāvāna,
Kiyā pāramī pūrṇa saba, bane Buddha Bhagavāna.*

For the good and welfare of all people, the compassionate one brought all perfections to completion and became the Blessed One, the Buddha.

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LIFE SUBSCRIPTION: RS 500/- (US \$100 OUTSIDE INDIA) BY BANK DRAFT, PAYABLE AT IGATPURI IN FAVOUR OF Vipassana Research Institute

Edited and published by R. P. Yadav for VRI, Igatpuri-422 403 and printed at Apollo Printing Press, G-259, SICOF Ltd., 69 MIDC, Satpur, Nashik-422 007
1 March, 2018 Posted at Igatpuri, Dist. Nashik, Posting Day: Purnima of every month Vip. NL Regd. No. 49916/90; P. Regn No. NSK/RNP-232/2018-2020

DATE OF PRINTING: 14 February, 2018, DATE OF PUBLICATION: 1 March, 2018

PRINTED MATTER**If undelivered, please return to:****Vipassana Research Institute**

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