

Research Journal

OF

Vipassana Research Institute

Vol. No. 1 Oct. 2012

Published every quarter by Vipassana Research Institute

Web version: www.vridhamma.org

Established in year 1985 to conduct scientific research on the theory and practice of Vipassana Meditation

Rev. Shri Satyanarayan Goenkaji



Rev. Shri Satya Narayan Goenkaji (born in 1924) is the Principal Teacher of Vipassana, the quintessence of the Buddha's practical teaching. He is the Founder of Vipassana International Academy and Vipassana Research Institute.

Born in Mandalay, Myanmar, in a businessman's family of Indian origin, he became one of Myanmar's ranking business leaders, with offices in many countries. When he was 30, he was elected president of the Yangon (formerly Rangoon) Chamber of Commerce and head of many social, educational and cultural organizations. He achieved outstanding success, but did not have inner peace. Instead, stress brought on crippling migraine headaches, which the world's best doctors were helpless to treat, except with addictive and debilitating drugs. It was at this point that Rev. Shri S N Goenkaji met and was inspired by a unique personality in the post-war Myanmar, Sayagyi U Ba Khin, the first Accountant-General of independent Myanmar. He did a course of Vipassana under the guidance of Sayagyi U Ba Khin and with practice got rid of the malignant migraine for ever. In 1969, Sayagyi U Ba Khin authorized Rev. Shri S N Goenka to go to India and teach Vipassana, as his representative. Since then, the Ganges of Dhamma again started flowing in the land of its origin. After arriving in India, Rev. Shri S N Goenka soon retired from his flourishing business and devoted his full time to teaching Vipassana.

From India, Rev. Shri S N Goenka spread the self-dependent, non-sectarian and result-oriented Vipassana Meditation Technique around the world. He made it freely available for all. He established around 95 Vipassana Meditation Centers.

In order to satisfy the curiosity of some meditators who wanted to know more about the source of Vipassana meditation, Rev. Shri S N Goenkaji published the Tipiṭaka, the original words of the Buddha along with its allied literature in Devanagari script and distributed them free of charge and also made available on Internet in various scripts again absolutely free for all.

Rev. Shri SN Goenkaji has been conferred the Padma Bhushan Award in 2012 by the President of India for his distinguished service of high order in social work. He has been awarded many degrees and honours in other countries too.

What is V. R. I.

The Vipassana Research Institute is a non-profitmaking body established with the principal aim of conducting scientific research on the theory and practice of Vipassana meditation. Vipassana meditation is a technique of observation and exploration of the mind-body phenomena. The technique leads to purification of mind and can bring about a major transformation in the attitude and behavioural pattern of an individual and through him in the entire society. The technique has a unique potential as an instrument for better education, better health, better organisation and better management development and social change for strengthening the concept of secularism, national integration and international understanding. Vipassana has been revived after a period of more than 2,550 years.

VRI has undertaken to conduct **academic research** and **practical investigation** into the teachings of the Buddha, the influence of the technique upon various aspects of life during the Buddha's time and now and carry out comparative studies of all related contemporary literature, thus, making the data available for today's researchers.

ACADEMIC RESEARCH

Exploration of Sources of Vipassana in the Tipiṭaka:

(i) Publication of the Tipiṭaka and other Allied Literature - Pāli literature and its commentaries and sub-commentaries contain the main source material. For the purpose of research, it was essential to have an authentic version of the Tipiṭaka, its commentaries and sub-commentaries in Devanagari Script. To achieve this basic prerequisite for research, i.e. availability of material, VRI undertook the gigantic project of compiling, editing and publishing of the entire Pāli Tipiṭaka, its Aṭṭhakathās (commentaries) and Ṭikās (sub-commentaries).

(ii) The Institute made the authentic version as compiled in the Chaṭṭha Sangāyana (Sixth Council) in Burma during 1954-56 in the Burmese Script as the base, for its publication. Pāli scholars from India and other countries including many learned Bhikkhus and Research Scholars from Burma assisted.

(iii) The entire Pāli literature has been published in 140 volumes, each volume containing about 400 pages. Enormous amount of careful, painstaking

and tedious preparatory work was carried out over several years.

(iv) The completed and published work in 140 volumes has the following salient features:

- a. Each volume contains a comprehensive index of relevant words and terms besides an index of verses.
- b. References to Vipassana, paññā, sati and sampajañña that are crucial for understanding the teachings of the Buddha are highlighted.
- c. The page references of the Roman edition of the Pali Text Society London and the Chaṭṭha Sangāyana Myanmar edition are also given.
- d. A summary of the suttas in Hindi, called Sutta-sara, is also given.
- e. The Canonical text, its Aṭṭhakathā, Ṭikā, and Anuṭikā are published together to form a set.

Preparing a Compact Disc (CD) of the Chaṭṭha Sangāyana Edition:

Preparing a CD of all the Pāli literature was another mammoth task the VRI took and successfully completed. Besides 140 volumes of Pāli texts, some more books have been entered into the CD. Some of its salient features are given below:

- a. Pāli texts can be viewed not only in Devanagiri script but also in the following six scripts: Roman, Sinhalese, Thai, Cambodian, Mongolian and Burmese.
- b. An easy-linking facility has been provided to easily access the corresponding Aṭṭhakathā, Ṭikā, and Anuṭikā of a Canonical text.
- c. The CD also contains a Pāli-Hindi Dictionary that gives the meaning of Pāli words via a dictionary icon.
- d. Programming has been done in such a way that any word or a phrase can easily be searched and one can know how many times a word occurs in a particular text and shows its appearance in different contexts. This is a powerful tool in the hands of the research scholars.
- e. It is also free-downloadable from the website, www.tipitaka.org.

Academic Journey:

VRI started with the publication of the Tipiṭaka in order to make the Buddha's words and literature accessible to researchers. The research became easy with the preparation of the CD of the Chaṭṭha Sangāyana publication.

VRI started imparting Intensive Residential Basic and Advanced training in Pāli language for Indian and foreign students simultaneously. Along with it non-residential courses in Pāli to be held weekly are also scheduled.

Apart from the publication of the Tipiṭaka along with its allied literature, preparation of the CD Chaṭṭha Sangāyana and Pāli teaching, VRI scholars have published a large number of books which are prescribed in the Universities and Institutes as part of their curriculum. *The Government of India has recognized the Institute for training in Vipassana and for the teaching of Pali as the only institute of its kind*, which integrates theoretical principles with the practice of Vipassana. There is a great dearth of scholars in Pāli language and literature and thus it has become incumbent on VRI to prepare Pāli scholars to further carry on research projects.

Department of Philosophy, University of Mumbai in collaboration with VRI has started a teaching course named "Diploma in Buddhistic Studies and Vipassana Theory and Practise" from the academic year 1999; the course is of two academic terms. It has gained much popularity with about 65 students enrolling every year.

VRI has been conducting historical study of the origin, development, decline & revival of Vipassana Meditation.

Additionally, comparative study between the Pāli Tipiṭaka and the Ancient Indian Literature like the Vedas, Upanishads and Jain Āgamas is carried on with reference to techniques, concepts and terms etc.

Some research areas are based on the influence of Vipassana on various aspects of day-to-day life.

The research publications and source materials have become the prescribed study material as a part of their curriculum in various Institutes and Universities where Pāli & Buddhistic Studies are taught.

PRACTICAL RESEARCH

VRI's endeavour is to provide scientific basis for establishing the several beneficial effects of practicing Vipassana on the health (physical and mental) of practitioner's – adults or children in addition to specially challenged individuals such as drug addicts, prisoners, and people suffering from psycho-somatic diseases such as hypertension. Further this includes proving how this technique of Vipassana is a very effective tool for attitudinal

change, management of stress and strain and for instilling in a person such qualities as compassion and equanimity and to promote integrity and efficiency in the discharge of one's duties and responsibilities.

Study of Effects of Vipassana Meditation on the Body and Mind

VRI, in close collaboration with the Vipassana International Academy (VIA), Dhamma Giri, Igatpuri, has been studying the effects of Vipassana meditation on the body and mind of an individual. VIA conducts regular practical courses and students of various age groups irrespective of caste, creed, colour, sex and nationality participate.

The Dissemination of Research Findings and Publication of Relevant Literature of Vipassana in Hindi, English and other Indian and foreign languages are an ongoing process. A large number of books & CDs are published by the Institute. Today, a vast treasure of knowledge and information based on direct experiences of the meditators is available on the working of the Mind-Body phenomena. VRI aims at transmitting this to the world community. It has started doing it with the use of full - fledged E.D.P centres fully equipped.

The four areas identified for research and study effects of Vipassana Meditation are *Health, Education, Social Change and, Organisation and Management Developments*.

Health: Studies have established its beneficial role as a positive mental health measure in various psychosomatic disorders, personality disorders, besides, alcohol and drug abuse & addiction.

Numerous anecdotal case reports of persons suffering from various health disorders, both physical and mental, are available pointing out the therapeutic efficacy of Vipassana. Besides, the technique has found ready acceptance with the healers of diverse disciplines, such as, Yoga, Naturopathy, Homeopathy, Ayurveda, Allopathy, etc., as it is free from dogmas, based on experience and focussed on relief from human suffering. However, it needs to be emphasized that any such health benefit is considered to be just a by-product of this profound technique of mental purification. The practice of Vipassana does hasten the healing process but more importantly, it transforms one's approach to life and its vicissitudes. One learns to face all sickness and suffering with equanimity; the healers too augment their ability to be a professional anchor to the sick in the tumult of their lives.

Education: Vipassana being a scientific and secular technique, has been found to be an ideal instrument to develop the emotional and spiritual dimensions of a child's personality, allowing him to grow into a balanced, confident and happy human being. Children courses are being conducted in India since 1986 and

over the years, they have continued to gather momentum both here and abroad.

Social Change: Many scientific studies have been carried out on the positive impact of Vipassana on one's personality and interpersonal relationships, etc. Research conducted at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences has established that Vipassana meditation increases persons' control of their emotions resulting in a reduction in feelings of anger, tension, hostility, revenge and helplessness. Drug addiction, neurotic and psychopathological symptoms also get diminished. In addition, prison inmates practising Vipassana meditation have shown an increased willingness to work, to participate in other treatment programmes, to abide by prison rules and to co-operate with prison authorities. The striking example of Dhamma Tihar has attracted many prisons all over the world to use Vipassana meditation as a tool for rehabilitation. The study conducted under the auspices of the University of Washington indicates a significant decrease in recidivism of the jail inmates practising Vipassana. The Jail Personnel of the North Rehabilitation Facility (NRF) in Seattle, Washington found that those who complete the Vipassana course are calmer, better disciplined and more reasonable. The result of all these researches is that Vipassana is now being practiced in prisons in USA, Spain, Mexico, Thailand, Taiwan, and New Zealand.

Organisation and Management Development:

With an increasing demand from professionals in various fields and government officials and white collared workforce a course was designed to specially cater to the demanding and stressful lifestyles of a professional career. This has been well received by high-ranking government officials and business executives. Since 2003-04 more than 800 personnel have been trained in Vipassana under this programme. It was held in Mandarin language for Taiwanese and Chinese countrymen. Addressing this segment of the population through such courses and analyzing the results in this vast field of corporate management is an ongoing effort by VRI. Many management institutes like Symbiosis and Sadhana Institute of Pune have made 10-day Vipassana course as a part of their curriculum.

The Government of Maharashtra has been a pioneer in introducing Vipassana to State Government officials since 1996. Since 2003, the government has been granting commuted leave of 14 days to attend a

Vipassana course to all employees of the state government. Organisations such as Maharashtra State Electricity Board (MSEB), Yashwantrao Chavan Academy of Development Administration (YASHADA), Pune have also followed suit. The recognition of the good effect of Vipassana by the Government of Maharashtra is so evident that Courses for children are included in its Mumbai schools as part of activity.

MITRA stands for Mind in Training for Right Awareness. Project MITRA has been formed to spread awareness about Ānāpāna and Vipassana courses in the education sector in the State of Maharashtra.

The Government of Maharashtra has passed a resolution vide GR No Sankirn2011/296/11/se-3 on 5th Oct 2011 with regard to conducting of Ānāpāna Courses for school children of Maharashtra

Under this resolution, all schools in Maharashtra have been asked to conduct One-day Ānāpāna meditation courses for their children studying from Std 5th to Std 10th

The schools have been asked to take assistance from VRI for conducting of these courses.

The aim is to impart the training to over two crore children across the state.

WHY RESEARCH JOURNAL:

VRI is embarking upon a new venture of bringing out a Research Journal with the express purpose of making the non-secular technique of Vipassana meditation reach all people living near and far. It will be a vehicle for sharing of ideas, experiences and activities giving researchers more insights.

It will also help research organizations and researchers to know innovations for implementation.

It will provide opportunity to people to imbibe positive aspects and value of Vipassana by the researches done at the V.R.I.

As this the age of science, people seek scientific basis of every technique they come across and the Research Journal will enhance their understanding of the Buddha's teachings scientifically.

VRI has decided to bring out the journal, containing Research articles quarterly i.e. after every three months.



Printed by: Apollo Printing Press, G-259, SICOFT Ltd., 69 MIDC, Satpur, Nashik-422007, Maharashtra.

**Edited and Published by:
Vipassana Research Institute
Mumbai 400 091, India.**

30 October 2012