



For the Benefit of Many

S. N. Goenka

Talk and Answers to Questions from Vipassana Students 1983-2000

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Acharya S. N. Goenka

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from Vipassana Students
1983-2000

**This compilation is intended for students
of Vipassana as taught by S. N. Goenka**



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Foreword

Since the early 1980s in India and around the world, there has been an astonishing increase in the number of Vipassana courses offered each year and the number of centres devoted to the practice of this teaching. This growth has been possible because of the selfless service of thousands of meditators. Working in many different capacities, they have freely given help so that still more people could take steps on the path of liberation.

To ensure that their service yields the best results, over the years Goenkaji has frequently given guidance to all who participate in this work. At yearly meetings in India or on visits to various centres, he has spoken about many different aspects of Dhamma practice and service. The transcripts of those talks and question and answer sessions are the sources for this volume.

The material included here covers the years from 1983 to 2000. For the most part it is presented chronologically, but not in every case, one exception, for example, is the talk placed at the end of the book since it provides a fitting and inspiring summation.

In all this mass of material, Goenkaji returns again and again to a central theme: what it means to give Dhamma service and how a server ought to work. He explains this at length but always by presenting a few key points.

The first is that service must arise from practice of the Dhamma. Those wishing to help others walk on the path of liberation must be walking on the path themselves: that is, they must maintain a regular daily practice of meditation and strive to observe the Five Precepts as carefully as possible. In fact, Goenkaji says, service is a way of deepening one's practice by developing the ten pāramīs.

Secondly, service must spring from a base of mettā. Even when servers have to discipline students, they should do so with a volition to help, with a heart filled with goodwill.

Another point is that service must be given selflessly, humbly, without any egotism. No-one should think that they are indispensable; no-one should suppose that service is an opportunity to do things as they want, or to achieve their own aims. Instead, it is an opportunity to set aside one's own views and become an instrument of the Dhamma.

This is how servers can work together harmoniously. And this is how the Dhamma will continue flourishing in its pristine purity for the good and benefit of many.

Goenkaji discusses these points in depth, as well as numerous other issues, for guidance on a particular issue, the detailed index directs readers to the passages dealing with that topic. In addition, a glossary explains the Pāli terms.

For publication purposes the source material has been condensed and edited to some extent, but every effort has been made to maintain Goenkaji's distinctive voice and faithfully convey his meaning.

If readers have a chance to listen to the original audio taps, they will find them very inspiring. Most of the taps are available for Dhamma servers to listen to between courses at Vipassana centres.

Goenkaji has not himself been able to read through this text, and it may therefore contain some errors and inconsistencies; these are the responsibility of the editors alone. Comments are welcome that might help to rectify any flaws.

May this volume prove useful to those whose service is a vital part of the spread of Dhamma.