



VIPASSANA
Newsletter Collection

From January 1998 to December 1999

Part - 3

Vipassana Research Institute

Vipassana

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[From January 1998 to December 1999]

A collection of articles by Vipassanācārya
Shri Satyanarayan Goenka and other meditators
published in Vipassana Newsletter



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Awaken in Wisdom

(The following two articles were originally published in the August 1995 issue of the Hindi *Vipaśhyānā Patrikā*. They have been translated and slightly adapted.)

Let us liberate ourselves from the bondage of ignorance. To become liberated from ignorance means to be liberated from the bondage of *dukkha* (suffering) in this life and *dukkha* resulting from the cycle of future births and deaths. It is ignorance that keeps us bound to *dukkha* in this life and in future lives.

What is ignorance? It is the state of dullness, heedlessness, unskillfulness. Because of ignorance, we keep generating new *saṅkhārās* (mental reactions) and keep defiling our minds with fresh negativities. We are barely aware of what we are doing: how we bind ourselves with the bonds of craving, with the bonds of aversion; and how, in our ignorance, we tighten the knots of these bonds.

We can eradicate ignorance by remaining aware, alert, and attentive every moment. Then we will not allow new *saṅkhārās* to make deep impressions on our minds like lines chiselled on granite; we will not allow ourselves to be bound by the fetters of craving and aversion. This quality of attentiveness of mind, endowed with understanding, is called *paññā* (wisdom) and it eradicates ignorance completely.

To awaken this wisdom, and to get established in it, we practice Vipassana.

Yathaṃ care: when we walk, we walk with awareness.

Yathaṃ tiṭṭhe: when we stand, we stand with awareness.

Yathaṃ acche: when we sit, we sit with awareness.

Yathaṃ saye: when we lie down, we lie down with awareness.

Right Volition of Dāna

(The following is a translation of an article originally published in the September 1995 issue of the Hindi Vipashyanā Patrikā.)

Dāna, when given with pure volition, is highly beneficial and makes our unhealthy minds healthy. When one gives *dāna*, the mind which is filled with avarice, harshness, enmity, selfishness, miserliness, and dullness, becomes noble, gentle, tender, tranquil, generous, virtuous and lively.

To give *dāna* is the fundamental duty of householders. In the ancient spiritual tradition of India, *dāna* has always had special importance. In ancient times, virtuous and wealthy householders and sages of the past—*Aṣṭaka*, *Vāmaka*, *Vāmadeva*, *Viśvāmitra Yamadagni*, *Aṅgīrasa*, *Bhāradvāja*, *Vaśiṣṭha*, *Kāśyapa* and others—used to organise great ceremonies of *dāna*. Noble donors like Emperor Vessantara in ancient times and Emperor Harṣha subsequently have established the great ideal of donating all their possessions. Their volition behind giving *dāna* was truly lofty. The volition of all for giving *dāna* should be similarly lofty and pure. Because of the distinctive organisation of society, the wealth of the people keeps getting accumulated with the rulers and the wealthy. If this wealth remains accumulated at one place, it begins to rot like stagnant water. It makes the whole community unhealthy. If wealth keeps coming and going like flowing water, then its purity is maintained. Having understood this, the donor, in order to save himself from the improper hoarding of wealth and considering his wealth as the wealth of the community, used to give *dāna* with the purpose of equitable distribution, so that all can share and enjoy this accumulated wealth. This wisdom of equitable distribution of wealth preserved the equilibrium of social prosperity and prevented it from becoming an unbalanced destructive force. The wealthy donor used to

Building the Dwelling of the Dhamma

The hour of Vipassana has struck at many places throughout the world. For many years, devoted students from many countries have worked diligently to make the Dhamma available to others. Now, with the establishing of many centres throughout the world, their efforts are coming to fruition.

The development of centres marks a new stage in the spread of Vipassana. It is important to understand its significance.

Centres of Vipassana meditation are not clubs designed for the enjoyment of their members. They are not temples in which to perform religious ceremonies. They are not places for socialising. They are not communes where members of a sect can live in isolation from the outside world, according to their own peculiar rules.

Centres are instead schools that teach one subject: Dhamma, the art of living. All who come to these centres, whether to meditate or to serve, come to receive this teaching. They must, therefore, be receptive in their attitude, trying not to impose their ideas, but rather to understand and apply the Dhamma that is offered.

To ensure that the Dhamma is offered in its strength and purity, strong discipline is observed at the centres. The more carefully this is maintained, the stronger the centres will be. Many ordinary activities are forbidden by this discipline, not because there is anything wrong with them, but because they are inappropriate at a centre for Vipassana meditation. Remember, these are the only places where one can learn this type of Vipassana. The discipline is a way of preserving the unique purpose of these centres; it should be guarded carefully.

The foundation of the edifice of Dhamma that is being constructed at these centres is *sīla* (moral conduct).



Acharaya Sri S. N. Goenka & Smt. Illaichidevi Goenka

Sri Satyanarayanji Goenka was born in Mandalay, Myanmar in 1924. Although he topped the list of all successful candidates in the whole of Myanmar in the tenth class, he could not continue his studies further. At a very early age he set up many commercial and industrial institutions and earned fabulous wealth. He also established many social and cultural centres. Because of tension he became a victim of migraine, which could not be cured by doctors of Myanmar and of other countries in the world. Then some one suggested him to take a course of Vipassana. Vipassana has done well not only to him but it has also been benefiting many others.

He learned Vipassana from Sayagi U Ba Khin in 1955. Sitting at the feet of his teacher he practiced it for fourteen years He also studied the words of the Buddha during this period. He came to India in 1969 and conducted the first vipassana course in Mumbai. After that a series of courses were held. In 1976 the first residential course of vipassana was held in Igatpuri and the first centre of vipassana was established here. Up till now 189 centres have been established all over the world. New centres also are coming up. At these centres 1500 trained teachers teach vipassana in 59 languages of the world. Not only ten-day courses are conducted at these centres but also at some centres 20-day, 30-day, 45-day and 60-day courses are conducted. All courses are free of charge. The expenses on food and accommodation etc are met by the self-willed Dana given by those who benefited from the course. Seeing its benevolent nature vipassana courses is held not only for the inmates of jails and school children in the world but also for police personnels, judges, government officers etc.

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