

The Gem Set In Gold

a manual of pariyatti containing
the Pāli and Hindi chanting from a ten-day course
of Vipassana Meditation as taught by

Acharya S. N. Goenka



Vipassana Research Institute

THE GEM SET IN GOLD

a manual of pariyatti
containing the Pāli and Hindi chanting
from a ten-day course of Vipassana Meditation
as taught by Acharya S. N. Goenka



Vipassana Research Institute
Dhamma Giri, Igatpuri

*Gāraṇo ca nivāto ca,
santutṭhi ca kataññūtā;
kālena dhammassavanam,
etaṃ maṅgalamuttamam.*

Respectfulness, humility,
contentment, gratitude,
listening to the Dhamma at the proper time—
this is the highest welfare.

—Gotama Buddha
Maṅgala Suttam

For a Vipassana meditator the literature of Pāli is a storehouse of Dhamma; so sweet—like a cake prepared with honey—it is sweet everywhere. Every word is full of ambrosia . . . I am sure this language is going to become very much alive.

—S. N. Goenka

CONTENTS

Introduction	vii
A Note about the Chanting	x
Pāli pronunciation	xii
The Opening Night of the Ten-day Course	1
The Daily Morning Chanting	5
Post-Pāli Sutta	10
Day One—Āṭānāṭiya Suttaṃ	23
Day Two—Ratana Suttaṃ	29
Day Three—Karaṇīyametta Suttaṃ	35
Day Four—Buddha Jayamaṅgala-aṭṭhagāthā	37
Day Five—Tikapaṭṭhāna	41
Day Six—Paṭiccasamuppāda	43
Day Seven—Bojjhaṅga-paritta	47
Day Eight—Mittānisaṃsa	51
Day Nine—Maṅgala Suttaṃ	55
Day Ten—Mettā-bhāvanā	59
Group Sitzings, Vipassana and Mettā Sessions	61
Vipassana Instruction Session	65
Adhiṭṭhāna Group Sitting Chanting	67
Mettā Day Chanting	72
Pāli Passages Quoted in the Discourses	77
Appendix: Word Meanings of the Pāli Chanting	83
Bibliography	114
List of VRI Publications	115
List of Vipassana Meditation Centres	118

INTRODUCTION

In 1969, S. N. Goenka, the revered teacher of Vipassana meditation, left his homeland, Myanmar (Burma), to travel to India. At that time Myanmar customs officials were especially vigilant about the smuggling of precious jewels out of the country. At the Yangon airport, Goenkaji was asked if he was carrying any valuables with him. He smilingly replied, “I am carrying a gem.” He went on to explain to the concerned official, “The gem I am taking from here will be used to pay back a debt of Myanmar to India. It originally came from India, and is sorely needed there today. By my taking it from here, Myanmar will not be any poorer. I am taking the jewel of the Dhamma.”

This jewel, the sublime practical teaching of the Buddha, has now been given to people throughout the world. Carefully preserved for centuries in the small country of Myanmar, it has, under Goenkaji’s compassionate and energetic guidance, returned to India, its source, and from there has spread to the rest of the world. Tens of thousands of people from a vast spectrum of cultures, religions and nationalities, have started walking on this ancient path, to free themselves from the bondage of suffering.

The treasure which Goenkaji has been distributing is Vipassana, the quintessence of the Buddha’s teaching. As he imparts the jewel of the practice, using his own words, in languages current in today’s world, he also encourages the study of the original teaching of the Buddha in *his* own language: Pāli. In Pāli these two complementary aspects of Dhamma are known as *paṭipatti* and *pariyatti*. Goenkaji refers to these as, “a gem, the beauty of which is enhanced by its golden setting.”

As a teacher, Goenkaji has always given primary importance to *paṭipatti*, the practical aspect, because it is only the experience of truth through systematic self-introspection that can purify the mind and relieve suffering. This is the gem of the Dhamma. Hand in hand with the practice of meditation, however, is the theoretical foundation, like the protective golden setting for a valuable gem. The firm foundation of *pariyatti* provides the necessary guidance and inspiration for practitioners to take, and keep taking, proper steps on the Path.

Fortunately for our generation and those that follow, S. N. Goenka is a master of both *pariyatti* and *paṭipatti*. Indeed, when he came to India in 1969, he brought both aspects of the Dhamma with him—not only his unique capacity to teach meditation, but also literally hundreds of texts of the Tipiṭaka, the Buddhist Pāli scriptures, in Burmese script.

The decades since have seen the ripening of these two aspects. Thousands of seekers have come to ten-day Vipassana courses in various parts of the world to experience first-hand the transformative effects of Dhamma—to put the Buddha’s words into practice, and start to emerge from suffering. And through the publications of the Vipassana Research Institute (founded in 1985) meditators have been able to study the Buddha’s words and practice at a much deeper level.

Goenkaji’s rare ability to explain the Buddha’s teaching is deeply enhanced by his proficiency in several languages, including Pāli. Pāli is the language in which the Buddha taught, and in which his teachings have been preserved. As with Sanskrit and Latin, it is not a contemporary spoken language, but a so-called “dead language”—a medium, nevertheless, conveying and illuminating a living tradition.

Pāli is unique in many ways. One of the meanings of the word Pāli is “that which protects, or preserves.” Pāli exists to preserve the words of the enlightened person, Gotama Buddha. The tradition is that, by expressing the sublime teaching which allows beings to be liberated from the rounds of suffering, Pāli protects the people; it preserves the invaluable treasure of the Buddha’s own words.

Adherence to the use of the Buddha’s language has been a profoundly significant part of the living tradition handed down in the Theravāda Buddhist countries, which have preserved Pāli in its oldest form. Faithfulness to the Pāli words of the Buddha has therefore been a central part of the teaching of S. N. Goenka, and the lineage which he represents.

Students at Vipassana courses practice meditation in a special environment—one where the highest merits of *pariyatti* and *paṭipatti* are conjoined. The meditators undertake the delicate and demanding task of examining their own minds in a surrounding which intermingles long stretches of silent introspection with periods of instruction, conveyed by Goenkaji’s recorded words in Hindi or English. Students of these courses are familiar with Goenkaji’s use of Pāli in the daily discourses (in which he explains the theory of the meditation technique), as well as in his practice of chanting both the Buddha’s words and his own inspiring compositions, rhymed Hindi couplets known as *dobas*.

Dhamma teachers have different modes of expression. For Goenkaji (who is a poet and orator in his native languages of Rajasthani and Hindi), his melodic use of Pāli and Hindi *dobas* is a medium through which his abundant *mettā* (feelings of goodwill towards all beings) is conveyed. When he chants in Pāli, or in his native tongues, along with the sounds of his resonant voice come waves of compassion and loving-kindness. This provides a congenial, supportive atmosphere in which the Dhamma can be received and practiced.

For many years, meditators have wanted to understand the meaning of the words chanted by Goenkaji during a ten-day course. *The Gem Set in Gold* is the first thorough compilation of these words of Dhamma, and their translation into English. This compilation is, in fact, a link to all the successive generations of meditators from the exalted time of the Buddha to the present, who preserved the technique in its pristine purity.

While impressive as *pariyatti*—a rich collection of inspirational passages from the Buddha and a contemporary Dhamma teacher of rare qualities—it is in conjunction with the actual practice that this volume lives up to its name. Students who hear Goenkaji’s chanting at a Vipassana course do so in the rarefied environment of a deep meditation course where they are putting the Buddha’s words into practice. Those who read them will understand their meaning and be able to apply them much more deeply in the context of their meditation practice.

May *The Gem Set in Gold* benefit many generations, and help to fulfill Goenkaji’s exhortation: “Our aim is always to experience the Dhamma within ourselves in order to emerge from all suffering. The means to do so is the practice of Vipassana meditation. Reading, writing and study are merely to find guidance and inspiration in order to go more deeply in the practice, and thus to come closer to the goal of liberation.”

THE OPENING NIGHT OF THE TEN-DAY COURSE

*Namo tassa bhagavato, arahato,
sammā-sambuddhassa.*

Homage to him, the blessed one, the worthy
One, the fully self-enlightened Buddha.

Opening Hindi Chanting

*Jaya jaya jaya gurudevajū,
jaya jaya kripānidhāna;
dharama ratana aisā diyā,
huvā parama kalyāṇa.*

My teacher, may you be victorious;
Compassionate one, may you be victorious
You gave me such a jewel of Dhamma,
which has been so beneficial to me.

*Aisā cakḥāyā dharama rasa,
biṣayana rasa na lubhāya;
dharama sāra aisā diyā,
chilake diye chudāya.*

You let me taste Dhamma's nectar,
now no sensual pleasure can allure.
Such an essence of Dhamma you gave,
that the shell [of ignorance] dropped away.

*Dharama diyā kaisā sabala,
paga paga kare sabāya;
bhaya bhairava sāre miṭe,
nirbhaya diyā banāya.*

You gave such a powerful Dhamma,
which helps and supports me at every step.
It has helped to rid me of all fears,
and made me absolutely fearless.

*Roma roma kirataga huvā,
ṛṇa na cukāyā jāya;
jīvūṇi jīvāna dharama kā,
dukkhiyana bātūṇi dharama sukha,
yahī ucita upāya.*

From every pore such gratitude is pouring
I cannot repay the debt.
I will live the Dhamma life
and distribute its benefit to the suffering
people [of the world]:
this is the only way [to repay the debt].

*Dharama gaṅga ke tīra para,
dukkhiyāroṇi kī bhīḍa;
saba ke mana ke dukha miṭe,
dūra hoyā bhava pīḍa.*

On the bank of the Ganges of Dhamma
there is a crowd of suffering people;
may all be freed from their misery and
liberated from the pain of birth and death.