

A large, multi-tiered golden pagoda stands prominently in the center-left of the image. The pagoda is surrounded by lush green tropical vegetation, including many palm trees. In the foreground, a wide river flows, with a small wooden pier and a few people visible on the right bank. The sky is a clear, bright blue. The overall scene is peaceful and scenic.

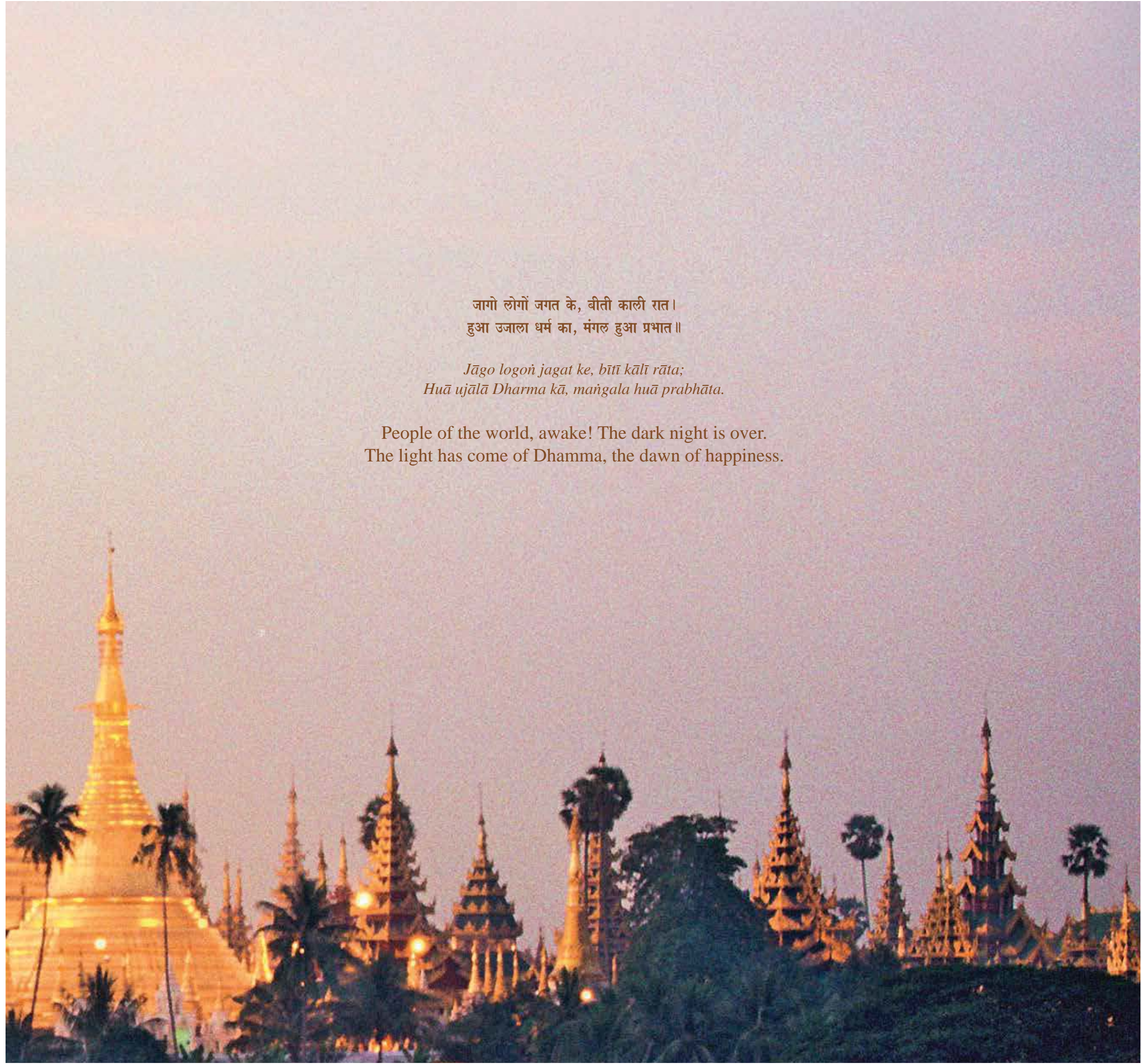
VIPASSANĀ MEDITATION

& ITS RELEVANCE TO THE WORLD

जागो लोगों जगत के, बीती काली रात ।
हुआ उजाला धर्म का, मंगल हुआ प्रभात ॥

Jāgo logoṅ jagat ke, bīṭī kālī rāta;
Huā ujālā Dharma kā, maṅgala huā prabhāta.

People of the world, awake! The dark night is over.
The light has come of Dhamma, the dawn of happiness.



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VIPASSANĀ MEDITATION A TECHNIQUE FOR ALL TIME



धर्म पंथ ही शांति पथ, धर्म पंथ सुख पंथ ।
धर्म पंथ पर जो चले, करे दुःखों का अंत ॥

*Dharma pañtha hī śānti patha, Dharma pañtha sukha pañtha;
Dharma pañtha para jo cale, kare dukhoñ kā aṅta.*

The path of Dhamma is the path of peace,
The path of Dhamma is the path of happiness;
Whoever walks the path of Dhamma makes an end of suffering.





Twenty-five centuries ago in India, a young man set out to investigate the basic truths of existence. That time and place seem infinitely far away from us today. But despite all the differences, we face the same questions to which he sought answers: What is the right way to live? Why is there suffering in the world? How can we find real understanding? How can we find real happiness?

Siddhattha Gotama was not the first to ask these questions. As so many have done, he looked for answers from the accumulated wisdom of the past and from wise people of his own time. Then he decided to search for the answers himself. And eventually that led him to sit down under a tree, close his eyes and explore inside.

There are detailed explanations of what he discovered in the following hours, but less well understood is how he discovered it. He was not granted a revelation by a supernatural power. He did not spend the time in intellectual analysis. Instead he sought to confront reality directly, to see things as they really are through a process of dynamic introspection.

That process is what we call *Vipassanā* meditation.

Vipassanā is a straightforward, practical method of self-examination. It makes use of tools that are available and acceptable to any human being: our own breath and physical sensations.

Meditators start by observing natural breath at the entrance of the nostrils. They don't try to control the breath or add any word to it. They don't try to count the number of times they breathe in or out. Instead, the only effort is to be aware of what is actually happening at this moment in this part of the body – the breath now entering, now leaving the nostrils.

Surely nothing could be simpler. And yet anyone who tries this discovers how fiendishly difficult it is. The mind keeps slipping away to thoughts of the past, projections of the future or senseless imaginings. We feel so restless that we cannot sit still, or so drowsy that we cannot hold our heads up.