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**VIPASSANA – AN ART OF
CORPORATE MANAGEMENT**

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Roop Jyoti was born in September 1948 in a Kansakar family of Nepal. Roop's father, Late Shri Maniharsha Jyoti was one of the key figures in the spread of Vipassana meditation in Nepal.

A Chemical Engineer from I.I.T., Bombay, Roop, along with his elder brother, Padma, helped his father expand the many business activities of the Jyoti family in Nepal. He later went to study at the Harvard University, U.S.A. and earned his M.B.A. and an M.P.A. from there. He is currently finishing his Ph.D. at the same university. In 1987, he took his first Vipassana course at Dharmashringa, Kathmandu.

The great benefits of Vipassana meditation, which resulted in a very peaceful death of his father had a profound effect on him, and he became an active member in the Trust of the Nepal Vipassana Centre. He is now a senior Assistant Teacher of Vipassana Meditation.

As the Vice-Chairman, Roop Jyoti continues to manage his family's business empire which ranges from re-rolling mill to oxygen factory, from spinning mill to carpet factory and encompasses commercial activities selling motor cycles, scooters, generators, pumpsets, tractors, trucks, buses, pharmaceutical products, lamps, luminaries, industrial gases, wool and many consumer products all over Nepal.

He is the Charter President of the Rotary Club of Kathmandu Mid-town and has served as the National Advisor to the Resident Representative of UNDP in Nepal. He was appointed a member of the Senate of the Tribhuvan University, Nepal's largest university, and has been called upon to serve as a member of Tariff Board of His Majesty's Government of Nepal for the last five years.

He is well known in Nepal as one of the top businessman and Industrialist, and a noted economist.

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VIPASSANA - AN ART OF CORPORATE MANAGEMENT

Vipassana is an art of many things. First, it is an art of living. How to live happily and harmoniously. How to live with equanimity. In life, wanted things don't always happen. It is impossible for all our desires to be fulfilled in spite of the abundance and the extent of resources at our command. We may think we possess this wisdom but when the time comes, we give in to our emotions and lose the balance of our mind. We surrender ourselves to our cravings and aversions, we become the slave of our mind and we suffer. Whereas, we should be the master of our mind, we should conquer our emotions, we should remain equanimous. Vipassana makes this possible. It enables us to live a happy, harmonious and peaceful life.

Every life must come to an end, that is the universal law of nature and it applies to everyone without any exception. And so when it ends, a happy life must end with peace and calm, not in misery and suffering. Vipassana makes us capable of attaining a dignified and peaceful death. Having been aware of impermanence while living, having been alert to aversions and cravings while living, having kept away from attachments while living, one becomes capable of practising all that while dying too. After all, our greatest attachment is towards ourselves, and towards our own life. So when we learn to distance ourselves from such attachment, we can die calmly and peacefully without misery and suffering. So Vipassana is also an art of dying.

My father, Maniharsha Jyoti, found out that he had lung cancer in July '92 and passed away in January '93. During the last days of his life, I was able to observe him very closely. He was a serious Vipassana meditator and every time he had a setback in the treatment, which happened many times, Vipassana brought back his balance of mind and enabled him to remain calm and peaceful. Finally, during his last trip to Bangkok, where we were taking him for chemotherapy, he learnt that he had very little time left and with the help of Vipassana he was able to give up his attachment to life, and so his last days were very peaceful. It was like water evaporating from a saucer, he passed away without a ripple. He remained calm and peaceful till the end without suffering. Watching him die peacefully, all of us around him could also remain calm and peaceful, although it was such a calamity for us. It occurred to us. "Oh, this is how Dhamma protects! Dhamma does not prevent old age or illness or death but whenever these things happen, and they

are bound to happen sooner or later, it gives us inner strength to face the situation with equanimity, a calm and balanced mind, not overwhelmed by misery!"

Vipassana is more, much more, and it is relevant to all people of all sorts, all sections of our society and all types of human activities. Vipassana is also relevant to the business world, to the world of trade and commerce, to the world of manufacturing, to the world of economic activities.

Vipassana teaches how to tackle ups and downs in life calmly. One engages in trade and the price sometimes goes up and sometimes goes down. One engages in manufacturing and one faced with problems and uncertainties all around - production problems, labour problems, raw material problems, marketing problems, finance problems and it goes on. One may engage in any type of business activity and there are always problems, there are always uncertainties, there are always ups and downs. We were expecting sales to go up but they go down. We were hoping the profits to rise but they decline. We are expecting the interest rates to go down but they go up. We are expecting the cost of goods sold to decrease but they increase. Are we able to deal with such situations calmly? Most certainly, if we are practising Vipassana and applying it in our daily lives.

Vipassana teaches how not to get upset in life. Business management involves dealing with people, good people, bad people, all kinds of people. Some behave decently, some don't. Some are satisfied customers, some aren't. Some are obedient workers, some aren't. Among this maze of uncertainty, there is one certainty - we don't have a choice of people we get to deal with. Whether we like our superiors or not. Whether we like our subordinates or not. Whether we like our working conditions or not. Whether we like the task assigned to us or not. We may not have any immediate options. Does it help to get upset? No, it only makes things worse, not only for ourselves but also for those around us. But we do just that unless, of course, we have learnt Vipassana meditation and are practising it regularly.

Vipassana teaches how not to react in the face of provocations. Friendly meetings turns into shouting matches. Nice customers suddenly get angry. Employees don't do what they are told to do. Workers make impractical, unrealistic demands. Bosses give unreasonable, impossible tasks. Do we get provoked and react with a fit of temper? That's what we do and make the situation worse for ourselves and for others. Unless, of course, we are trained in Vipassana meditation and have learnt to observe our sensations, the natural vibrations within ourselves.

Vipassana provides us with a skill to deal with all types of situations in life and serenity, tranquility, and equanimity. There could not be another sphere of life where such a skill is of more utility, of more relevance, of more importance, than the corporate world.

I am a businessman and I use cost-benefit analysis, consideration of trade-offs etc. for making decisions. When we have a limited amount of money and we have to decide where to spend it, we figure out where it will give us the most benefit and even save us money in the future. Similarly, when we have a limited amount of time, we should figure out where the time spent will give us the maximum benefit and even save time for us in the future. I have received many practical benefits from Vipassana. I do not easily get upset, irritated or angry; if at all, only rarely and only for a short while, so I do not waste time on these things. If I am wavering on some decision, "sīla" and "dhamma" show me the way. I am more aware of my responsibilities. I am more effective as a manager. People take us more seriously when we tell them with a cool and calm mind rather than when we shout at them in temper about what they have done wrong and what they should do to redress it - whether they are our employees or our children. Experiencing such benefits, I find time for Vipassana, even though my time is always in short supply.

How does Vipassana help? Vipassana helps by enabling us to gain control over our mind. After all, an uncontrolled mind is the cause of our miseries. We want this and we want that. We don't want this and we don't want that. We desire this to happen, we desire that not to happen. All this never ends; it just goes on and on, and we suffer, we get upset, we get irritated, we become miserable. If we can become the master of our mind rather than a slave to it, all this can change and we can remain happy, composed and calm in spite of any event that may take place. Vipassana helps us by removing impurities of our mind.

Our ego keeps on growing and growing. All our lives, we go on accumulating fear, anger, animosity, hatred, greed but we never learn how to get rid of them, how to eradicate them. We know how to clean our body but don't know how to clean our mind. Vipassana teaches us how to clean our mind and how to keep it clean and pure.

The experience of a number of business enterprises has shown that the introduction of Vipassana meditation to the people in the organization has improved the working atmosphere, the co-operative attitudes, the discipline and the harmony within. Managers have become more patient in dealing with business uncertainties and more tolerant in dealing with troublesome employees. Workers have

become more disciplined and better capable of carrying out their tasks, even if they entailed repetitious and monotonous routines. Observing the benefits of Vipassana many business and non-business organizations have begun providing paid leave to their employees to attend Vipassana meditation courses. Some have treated Vipassana as a training programme, some have included it in their Human Resources Development activity and yet others have simply considered it as an aspect of employee welfare. Vipassana has reduced instances of confrontation and situations where conflicts arise unnecessarily. After all, Vipassana makes a person live happily and happy individuals make a happy organization. Employees become grateful towards their employers for giving them the opportunity to learn Vipassana and employers reap the rewards in the form of higher productivity and better morale.

Vipassana teaches us how to be responsible without developing attachment. Vipassana does not make us indifferent, it makes us more aware of our responsibilities. Vipassana trains us how not to react involuntarily but how to be properly pro-active. Vipassana does not make us unambitious, it makes us more resourceful. Vipassana develops our will power to persist with the right actions, it makes us more patient, more persevering.

Vipassana teaches us how to tolerate short-term pains for the long-term gains. We may be doing our best for the good of the organization but the desired outcome may not take place. Do we get upset, irritated, annoyed, disappointed, frustrated? If yes, we have developed an attachment. If no, and we keep on trying untiringly, without giving up, searching for more suitable alternatives, continually seeking more appropriate methods, then we have learnt to fulfil our responsibilities ever more successfully. Vipassana makes us capable of doing all this by making us become aware of our inner self. With Vipassana we get rid of our negativities and purify our mind and a pure mind guided by pure Dhamma always makes the right decision, always takes the right actions.

Vipassana is an art of stress management. Vipassana is an art of people management. Vipassana is an art of conflict management. There may be more to the science of management but Vipassana can become very nearly the art of total corporate management.

Roop Jyoti