Words of Dhamma

Jhāya bhikkhu mā pamādo, mā te kāmaguṇe ramessu cittaṃ.
Mā lohaguḷaṃ gili pamatto, mā kandi ‘dukkhamida’nti ḍayhamāno.

Meditators, meditate, don’t be heedless, don’t run after sense pleasures. Do not, being heedless, swallow a red-hot iron ball, and while burning cry out, “This is misery.”

The Significance of Meditation Cells


My Dear Dhamma sons and daughters,

Where pure Dhamma arises, there the earth begins to reverberate with pure Dhamma; indeed, the entire atmosphere vibrates with Dhamma. Who knows for how many centuries this blessed land around here has ripened with Dhamma practice? That is indeed the reason Dhamma has had the opportunity to arise here and impart welfare to countless people.

What is there to say of the Dhamma vibrations of the land here at this centre where determined meditators with strong volition meditate and where no other activity but that involving Dhamma is undertaken? How does one free oneself of craving, aversion, and ignorance? Not by mere contemplation but by active practice. Through direct experience, the mind is purified at very deep levels and its old accumulations of impurity dissolve slowly and are washed away, eradicated.

In such a land, the very atmosphere turns rich with Dhamma, benefiting innumerable beings. If a person coming to such a place practises even a little, he benefits a lot. People are presently immersed in meditation on this land. Many more people will meditate in the future as meditation cells sprout up. Of course, effort is required to progress on the path of meditation; without it, one cannot progress. Secondly, if the method of meditation practice is pristine and pure, then the benefits become manifold. If meditation is not in its pristine form, though strong effort may be made, one will not obtain the kind of benefit that one should. Proper guidance by a teacher is needed so that the meditator is not led astray. The meditation atmosphere is also an important consideration. A meditator will not benefit much from meditating at a place that has not been appropriately ripened with Dhamma vibrations.

A group of meditators recently travelled to locations where saints (arahants) had practised in the past. Even after such a long time had passed, these meditators found that the atmosphere in these places was very supportive for meditation. As such, India is significant in its own right. This land is truly blessed, which is why the practice of pure Dhamma began here and will continue to spread here more and more in the future.

Importance of meditation cells

According to the Tathāgata, one person meditating alone is like Brahma meditating, and two people meditating together are like devas meditating. Three people sitting together to meditate is equivalent to a renunciate meditating; however, if more people gather together, there is no meditation, only noise and confusion, as one does not reach the depths of meditation practice. This highlights the importance of meditation cells. A cell (suññāgāra) is a small, empty room. When a person meditates alone like this, it has enormous benefits.

The cells in the Myanmar centre where I learned Vipassana were permiated with Dhamma vibrations. It was very enriching and fruitful to meditate in them. Only a dedicated meditator can recognise the difference it makes. Similarly, suññāgāras have come up at Dhammagiri in Igatpuri, and when people meditate in them it helps them a lot. The cells serve an important role:

Suññāgāraṃ paviṭṭhassa, santacittassa bhikkhuno;
Amānusī ratī hoti, sammā Dhammaṃ vipassato.
– Dhammapadapāḷi – 373, Bhikkhu-vaggo.

Sammā Dhammaṃ vipassato – one sits for Vipassana rightly perceiving the Dhamma.

Where? Suññāgāraṃ pavīṭṭhassa – inside a meditation cell. Santacittassa – by practising Vipassana correctly, the mind becomes tranquil, calm. And then, amānusī ratī hoti – such joy, such bliss is felt that is beyond sensual gratification. The experience of pure Dhamma is far beyond sensuality; it is a divine feeling, a brahmic feeling, as one mediates alone, without any disturbance or obstacle.

Cells will come up on this blessed land too, where meditators will be able to go deep in Dhamma through their own practice. It will be for their great welfare. Even if one seeker benefits from this, then those who put in great effort and sacrifice to build these cells will benefit immensely from it. Nothing can be more valuable than this.
Dāna Pārami

Dāna is an important pārami. At one time when the Buddha was describing one of his previous lives as a bodhisatta, he said that when he was the king of a large kingdom, he had felt inspired to give dāna, so he began giving away his treasury. For seven years he provided abundant clothing, food, medicine, housing, and vehicles to countless hundreds of people. Everything needed for a good, worldly life was provided, so that no one was left with worldly wants. This was such a meritorious act, such a multiplication of pāramis. The Lord went on to explain that one meal will, however, have far more merit than this enormous amount of worldly dāna if it is offered to a sotāpanna (one who has attained the first stage of liberation).

One who becomes a sotāpanna by strengthening his sīla, samādhi, and paññā, has turned from an anariya into an ariya; one who has realised Nibbāna for the very first time gains the first milestone of enlightenment on the path of Dhamma. Giving a donation to a person who has entered this stream of liberation is highly meritorious, as it results in the seeds of dāna pārami being planted in very fertile soil.

The Buddha continued and said that there was no one who had reached the state of sotāpanna at that time when he was king. Vipassana was not available so there was no way for people to realise Nibbāna, and so dāna had to be given to whoever happened to be there at that time.

Let us understand the reason for this. By giving a meal to someone, we are extending his life by a day. But who are we giving it to? Let’s say, as an example, there is a tiger, and there is also a cow and we give food to them both. The food given to the cow is a more meritorious dāna because the cow will benefit the lives of many, whereas the tiger will harm others. Similarly, dāna given to a human being is more beneficial than dāna given to a cow because humans have the potential to liberate themselves through insight meditation by learning how to untie the knots of kamma within. This cannot be done by an animal—a cow can never liberate itself; nature has not given it this ability. But if our dāna of a meal even extends a person’s life by one day, then who knows? On that one day, this person may come into contact with pure Dhamma and find the path by which he will be able to untie his knots of impurity and liberate himself from misery.

Now let us consider an ordinary person who has not yet found the path of Dhamma and has spent his life in unwholesome pursuits compared to a person who has lived a wholesome life and has started walking on the path of Dhamma. Giving a dāna of food to the latter is more meritorious in comparison, since if his life is extended even by one day due to our dāna, it will allow him to walk further on the path of virtuous conduct. And, indeed, as he progresses along this path, he will eventually attain the goal of ultimate realization. This dāna will be a huge benefit to him as he is following the path of Dhamma. And then, giving food to someone who has realised Nibbāna rather than someone who has not realised Nibbāna is even more meritorious because such a person is not only benefiting himself by living another day, but is suffusing the environment with Dhamma vibrations every moment with each breath he takes. Who knows how many people he will help. Hence the Buddha said that giving a dāna of just one meal to a sotāpanna in comparison to giving to so many others who have not yet attained enlightenment, is much more meritorious and beneficial.

Similarly, giving food to one who is sakadāgāmi (one who has attained the second stage of liberation) is more meritorious and beneficial than giving to many sotāpannas, and giving food to one anāgāmi (one who has attained the third stage of liberation) is more meritorious than giving food to many sakadāgāmis. Giving food to an arahant (one who has attained the forth and final stage of liberation) is also more meritorious than giving food to many anāgāmis, while giving food to a Sammā Sambuddha is more meritorious than giving food to many arahants.

Then, he said, regardless of how large of a congregation is fed and whatever amount of merits are gained by this, if a convenience for meditators is created; for example cells are built where people can sit and meditate seeking liberation, then this dāna will be a more meritorious act.

Hence, it cannot be said that all the work carried out so far at this center has been fruitful. But once the cells are completed so each person can sit alone, indeed, if living quarters are also built for each individual to stay in, then good. But even if individual living quarters are not yet feasible, at least one’s meditation space should be separate so that no other person’s meditation can disturb or obstruct this person in his journey. In such circumstances, a meditator’s progress is multiplied. It is very good that the work of building cells on this Dhamma land has begun.

Best Dāna - Meditate on this Land

This country has a tradition of performing sacred rituals on land that will be developed. But, where pure Dhamma is to be practised, what can the ritual be? The homage offered here is to sit and meditate on this land. There is no better way to pay homage or respect than to generate pure vibrations. Therefore, when we sit here and meditate, we pay proper homage to this land.

May the vibrations of Dhamma spread throughout this land benefiting countless people. This is the sacred homage offered to the land—the homage paid to this land. All those who have meditated here, purifying their minds, will feel blessed with a feeling of metta: “Just as I have benefited so much from this and have felt peace and joy, even if only to a small degree, may such tranquil peace benefit an increasing number of people. May more and more people free themselves from their kammic bonds.”

Such a blessed feeling does arise within: “Oh, how can I be debt-free?” One can be of help in whatever way one is capable, perhaps by giving talks or by giving dāna. But the best way of helping is when one meditates. The more an old student meditates sincerely on this land, the more he or she will become a vehicle for the welfare of others.

Many people attained the nibbanic state during the lifetime of my teacher. They could enter and remain in this state whenever they wanted. Sayagyi would ask these meditators, “How can you be debt-free?” He would then go on to say
that some people would try to pay off their debts by making financial contributions, volunteering their physical labour, or in some other way. But for meditators of your calibre, coming here at least once a week is ideal. After an hour in a cell meditating in nibbānic samādhi, you are free to leave, having given such an important Dhamma service.

Any meditator, regardless of his level of development, will generate vibrations up to that level. The meditation facilities being provided by building cells is indeed a work of great merit, but a more effective way to gather pāramis is for every meditator to come here once a week and meditate, thus giving this dāna, which will immensely ripen this land. The land will become so rich in Dhamma as a result of this that any meditator who comes here to meditate will gain much more with less effort. Every person must exert effort; he must struggle with his impurities; however, if the surrounding atmosphere is full of Dhamma, the struggle will be less.

The outer atmospheric vibrations will cause obstruction if they are impure. One is fighting against one’s own inner impurities, and if the outer atmosphere pulls one down, meditation becomes that much harder. In such situations, generating Dhamma vibrations will provide a shield. Meditators who meditate here once a week will have the merit, but a more effective way to gather merit, but a more effective way to gather pāramis is for every meditator to come here once a week and meditate, thus giving this dāna, which will immensely ripen this land. The land will become so rich in Dhamma as a result of this that any meditator who comes here to meditate will gain much more with less effort. Every person must exert effort; he must struggle with his impurities; however, if the surrounding atmosphere is full of Dhamma, the struggle will be less.

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May all be happy! May all be happy! May all be happy!
May all beings be happy! be peaceful! be liberated!
—Kalyanamitta, S. N. Goenka

Dhammīc Death

Vipassana teacher Dilip Deshpande died peacefully in the morning of March 3, 2023, at his residence. He continuously provided Dhamma service at Dhammagiri and other centres for nearly 40–45 years. He handled a variety of duties with great sincerity, including organizing camps, arranging ATs for camps at centres or in gypsy camps, and scheduling long courses. He made a significant contribution to the ‘Mitra Upakrama’ initiative, which promoted Vipassana in government schools. He actually led a Dhamma life, at times spending months in a straw hut without regard for the heat, cold, or rain while rendering true Dhamma duties. The heartfelt wish of his Dhamma family is that such a dedicated, saintly one may ever proceed to Nibbāna on the path of Dhamma.

Future Course Schedule and Applications

Future Course information is available on the internet. As a result of the new COVID-19 rules, all types of bookings are currently only available online. Paper applications will not be accepted. As a result, please visit the following link and apply online directly for your appropriate course or dhamma service at Dhammagiri:

https://www.dhamma.org/en/schedules/colgrid

Please apply similarly as per the schedule of other centres. Here is the link for all Indian centres: https://www.dhamma.org/en-US/locations/directory#IN

New VR site for applying for courses: https://schedule.vridhamma.org and for worldwide courses: www.dhamma.org

Very Important Notices

1. Central IVR (Interactive Voice Response) number-022-50505051.
Applicants can call this number from their registered mobile number (the number mentioned in the form) to check their status, cancel, transfer, or re-confirm their application. They can also contact the centre through this system. This is a central number for all Vipassana centres in India.

2. If you are sending non-centre Dhamma programs to be published in Newsletters, please send through the CAT (Coordinator Area Teacher) and if it’s for a centre, it should come through the Centre Teacher.

Vipassana Activities in Greater Mumbai Area

There are several Vipassana Centres and Meditation Facilities in the Greater Mumbai area - Please View the link: https://mumbai.vridhamma.org/1-day Courses and Group Sitting Information in India: Please view the link below: https://www.vridhamma.org/1-day-Courses-Information-in-India

Additional Responsibility

1. Shri Anil and Sunita Dharmadashe will take responsibility of CAT of Bihar
2. Shri Madan Mutha, Kolhapur will continue to hold the responsibility to assist the CAT for Goa, Sindhudurg, and Ratnagiri of Konkan area.
3. Shri Ravinder Bagga, To assist the CT of Dhamma Dhaja

Centre Teachers

1. Shri Shiwardarao Jadav, Center teacher of Dhamma Padesa
2. Shri Vasantrao Karade, Center teacher of Dhammalaya, Kolhapur center.
3. Shri Prakash Borse, CAT will be CT for Dhamma Udak, Dapoli, Ratnagiri
4. Shri Abhimanyu Patil, Dhule, Center teacher of Dhamma Pabhas, Nandurbar.
5. Shri Sitaram Sahu- CT for Dhamma Ketu, will be Acting CT for Dhamma Kuti, Dhamma Garh, and Dhamma Anchal

New Responsibility Teachers

1. Miss Charu Gupta, New Delhi
2. Shri Rajendra Prasad, Faridabad, Haryana

Senior Asst. Teachers

1. Shri Rakesh Singh Bisen, Lucknow, U.P. + To assist the CT of Dhamma Kalyana
2. Shri Amit Sawhney, Noida, U.P.
3. Mrs. Urvashi Patel, Ahmedabad, Gujarat
4. Mr. P. Venkatesh, Bengaluru
5. Mr. Suresh Babu K., Bengaluru
6. Dr. A. Shivaraj, Bengaluru

New appointments Assistant Teachers

1. Mrs. Gurupad Chaddha, Mumbai
2. Shri Bansilal Pagare, Dhule
3. Mrs. Vimal Pandhari, Jalgaon
4. Mrs. Shrilaxmi N. Telangana

Children’s course teachers

1. Daw Lwin Wain Min Tho, Myanmar
2. Ma Min Min Thu, Myanmar
3. Daw Wai Wat Tun, Myanmar
4. Daw Ohn Yee, Myanmar
5. Daw Aye Aye Kyi, Myanmar
6. Daw Khin Hta Kyi, Myanmar
7. Daw Aye Thae Tha Tha, Myanmar
8. Daw Ei Tha, Myanmar
9. Daw Hay Mar Hlaing Myint, Myanmar
10. Daw Mon Thu Zai, Myanmar
11. Daw Hay Mar Oo, Myanmar
12. Daw Khin Mya Lwin, Myanmar
13. Daw Khin Thadant Kyi, Myanmar
14. Daw Yin Yin Win, Myanmar
15. Daw Khin Ohmar Hlaing, Myanmar
16. Daw Thine Tin Pyant, Myanmar
17. Daw Khin Khin Nyant, Myanmar
18. Daw Khin Nwe Oo, Myanmar
19. Daw Win Mon Wai, Myanmar
20. Daw Zin Mar Oo, Myanmar
21. Daw Yu Yu Htwe, Myanmar
22. Daw Moe Swe, Myanmar
23. Daw Myint Myint Thein, Myanmar
24. Daw Khin May Htay, Myanmar
25. Daw Khin Mar Mar Moe, Myanmar
26. Daw Khin Mya Oo, Myanmar
27. Daw Thin Thin Pyant, Myanmar
28. Daw Myint Myint Thein, Myanmar
29. Daw Pan Hlaing Swe, Myanmar
30. Daw Gangar, Myanmar
31. U Win Bo Bo, Myanmar
32. U Tun Min, Myanmar
33. U Sein Maung, Myanmar
34. U Win Maung, Myanmar
35. U Tun Wal, Myanmar
36. U San Hla, Myanmar
DHAMMA DOHAS

Ho ekākī dhyāna kara, dhyāna jñāna kī khāna;
Saba dhyānoṅ  meṅ śreṣṭha hai, yaha vipaśyanā dhyāna.

Turn to solitude and sit in meditation, it is a mine of wisdom; Vipassana is the quintessential meditation.

Vipaśyanā kī āga meṅ, jala jāeṅ saba papa;
Aṅtaratama śītala bane, dūra hoṅya bhava tāpa.

All the defilements burn away in the fire of insight; the heat of existence is removed, one becomes completely cool.

Jo dekhe isa satya ko, vimala vipaśyī hoya;
Baṅdhana baṅdha pāeṅ nahīṅ, mukta dukhoṅ se hoya.

A meditator who can see this truth is purified, freed from bondage, freed from all sufferings; Bondages can no longer bind him.
Centenary Celebrations of Birth Year of Pujya Guruji S.N. Goenka
Schedule of Mega Courses at GLOBAL VIPASSANA PAGODA, Gorai, Mumbai

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Registration link:- oneday.globalpagoda.org
For any other information- Tel: - 022-50427500 / +91 8291894644
• Email: guruji.centenary@globalpagoda.org

N.B. The QR code on top right corner contains informations regarding Centenary Program.

True Homage

Let us all pledge to make every effort to meditate and to incorporate the Dhamma that he has given us into our lives as much as possible. In this centenary year, this will be our true homage to respected Goenkaji.