

Vipassana Newsletter

In the tradition of Sayagyi U Ba Khin, as taught by S. N. Goenka

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Words of Dhamma

Karaṇīyamatthakusalena, yantasantaṃ padaṃ abhisamecca;

Sakko ujū ca suhujū ca, suvaco cassa mudu anatimānī.

– K.N. Suttanipātapāḷi, 8/143 Mettasuttaṃ.

One who is skilled in welfare and who wishes to attain the ultimate peace, Should be able, upright, very upright, soft spoken, gentle, and humble.

ANNUAL MEETING: DHAMMA GIRI, MARCH 4, 1989

CLOSING ADDRESS by S.N GOENKA

My dear Dhamma sons and Dhamma daughters:

It is now nearly twenty years since a great responsibility was placed on my shoulders by my Dhamma father, Sayagyi U Ba Khin. When I review this work of *dhamma-dūta* it is astonishing to see the fruits of Dhamma, to see how Dhamma is growing. Twenty years ago this technique was new to the country, and the Teacher was unknown, yet thousands of people started coming to the courses.

But the bigger wonder was the way these Dhamma servers started serving, taking such pains to help others to learn Vipassana. In those non-centre camps held in places without proper facilities, the servers faced so much discomfort, so many inconveniences, and yet they gave such selfless service, with so much love and compassion.

When centres started being built it looked as if the facilities would make it easier for the management, but now the problems are merely of a different nature. New structures keep coming up, and whatever has been built needs repair and maintenance.

Whether one is a Dhamma server or an assistant teacher, all are householders and each one has some responsibility towards family and livelihood, yet they spare so much time and suffer so many inconveniences. It is unbelievable! Nobody even thinks of monetary gain, and they train themselves to understand that the respect given to them is actually given to Dhamma, that they are simply representatives of Dhamma.

In spite of all the discomforts, the servers feel so delighted: “Look, so many people are receiving Dhamma!” Besides this delight, what else do they receive? The Teacher inherited from his Dhamma father a quality of very strict discipline and sometimes he uses hard words. The servers give so much selfless service and in return they are given reprimands: “You did like this? You useless fellow! Why did you do that?” This is what they are given from their Dhamma father and from others! Nobody thanks them for the service they give.

It would be very easy for someone to say, “Forget all this! Let this teacher do his own work, why should I spend my time here? And all these ungrateful fellows, why should I spend my time on them?” But no, they still carry on in spite of all the criticism.

There is a good reason behind that. We do not know how many lives in the past we have performed meritorious deeds together. Gaining merits together brings people together in future lives, to again perform meritorious deeds. Or, in so many past lives we would have meditated together and this brings us together to meditate again.

So it is not that somebody has only received Dhamma recently in a ten-day course, and has appreciated Dhamma so much that this person feels like serving. Oh, no! Of course that is the immediate cause, but the greater cause is the work we have done together in different lives. Having tasted Dhamma in one way or the other in the past, this person feels, “May more and more people come in contact with Dhamma and come out of their misery.”

During many lives one has understood—*sabbadānaṃ dhammadānaṃ jināti*—“giving Dhamma is the highest dāna,” and this becomes clearer every time we serve. One can work hard and donate millions, building different kinds of facilities for others—this is good because people benefit, don’t stop this. But when one compares the dāna of Dhamma, one finds there is no comparison.

Ups and downs are bound to come in life and if someone can face all that smilingly, oh, that is the biggest gift that can be given to anyone! This gift of Dhamma is not only made by the Teacher or the assistant teachers, but by all those who are serving.

Although the work done in the last twenty years is satisfactory, still so much more has to be done. When misery is so great, Dhamma has to arise. When there is so much darkness, light is needed, Dhamma is needed.

I see brightness for the future. Not only because of the present group of people who work so selflessly, but for generations those with good *pāramīs* from the past will take up the job, and the wheel of Dhamma will keep on rotating.

There is a danger to the rotation of the wheel of Dhamma if people make it a livelihood. How could this be Dhamma? You are expecting something in return. The danger also exists if mad people serve who crave only for position, power, or status. Then again Dhamma will not be Dhamma because there is no purity. Another danger is that someone will add something to Dhamma merely to please a particular group or sect. When an ignorant person starts doing that it will be a great danger signal for the rotation of the wheel of Dhamma. There is nothing to be added, nothing to be taken out, Dhamma is absolutely pure, absolutely complete—*kevalaṃ paripuṇṇaṃ, kevalaṃ parisuddhaṃ*.

Those who are giving service should remember that Dhamma is not spreading because of them, but because it is the time for Dhamma to spread. They are just vehicles, and should feel so pleased to be a vehicle. Because of this they are gaining wonderful *pāramīs*, wonderful *paññā* and developing their own meditation. This is not an ordinary gain.

A large number of suffering people have some unwholesome *saṅkhāras* accumulated in the past which have brought so much misery to them, but many also have some very good *saṅkhāras*, and the time has arisen now that the fruit of their wholesome *saṅkhāras* should come up as the Dhamma. Then who are you or I to give them Dhamma? They are receiving

Dhamma because of their good karmas of the past. We are just vehicles, that is all.

I keep on telling the story of the puppy walking under the bullock cart thinking, “I am carrying the entire burden of this bullock cart! That trader gives so much importance to those two bullocks, but over them is only the weight of the yoke. Over me is the weight of the whole bullock cart!” A mad puppy.

Nobody who serves Dhamma should think like that puppy. You should feel, “It is Dhamma that is working, and I have a wonderful shelter, I am in the shadow of Dhamma. Good!”

Keep remembering this couplet, a *dohā* by a great saint of this country, *Kabir*:

*Kabīra khaḷā bāzāra meṇ, liye kuḷhārā hātha;
Śiṣh utāre, bhui dhare to cale hamāre sātha.*

Kabir says, “I am here calling you, but I have an axe in my hand. Only one who is ready to chop off his head and throw it in the dust can come with me.” This is the prerequisite: cut off your head, cut off all the ego, and then come. Yes, it will be wonderful for you and for all others who practise Dhamma. And I am sure that not only now, but for generations there will be people coming up who will have their heads chopped off, who will not work for ego. Then Dhamma will remain pure.

I am sure that a large number will benefit—those who serve and also those who are served. Dhamma works both ways: it is good for you and good for others, beneficial for you, beneficial for others.

May Dhamma grow. Keep on enjoying Dhamma by growing in Dhamma, under the shelter of Dhamma. May Dhamma grow, so that more and more suffering people round the world grow under the shelter of Dhamma, and come out of their misery. May Dhamma spread for the good of many, for the liberation of many.

Bhavatu sabba maṅgalaṃ

In Gratitude!

Most Respected Gurudev, Sayagyi U Ba Khin!

I still feel your kind presence. You are unmistakably present wherever Dhamma is present. May Dhamma always be present, and may your kindness be there as well! This is my highest wish.

Whenever I am in the presence of Dhamma, I always remember your infinite compassion and my mind is filled with gratitude and rapture. How delightful that is!

The mind is filled with infinite gratitude for the Lord, the Fully Enlightened Sakya Muni Gotama, who, for innumerable births, led a meditative life as he kept perfecting the ten *pāramitās*. By doing so, not only did he liberate himself by walking on the path he discovered, he also explained the path to many so that they could liberate themselves by walking on it. He kept on explaining the path to people all his life with a compassionate heart. Countless people benefited from this.

My heart is filled with gratitude for all those liberated Arahantas, who, having received this beneficial knowledge, went forth from village to village, town to town, and district to district in accordance with the noble wish of the Lord for the good of many and for the happiness of many: “*Caratha bhikkhave cārikaṃ, bahujana hitāya, bahujana sukhāya, lokānukampāya.*” They spent their lives teaching and explaining this path to liberation.

The mind is also filled with gratitude for all those great beings who kept the Ganges of pure Dhamma flowing for many generations.

The heart is filled with gratitude for the two Arahantas, namely Sona and Uttara, who braved all the dangers of travelling to a foreign country and, like King Bhagīrath, brought the Ganges of Dhamma to *Suvaṇṇa Bhūmi* and quenched the thirst of many.

My mind is filled with gratitude for those teachers of Dhamma in Myanmar who, through the teacher-to-disciple tradition, kept the purity of the teaching intact from generation to generation. They did not let it get mixed, not even with one word. They kept it free from any sectarian colour, form, or imagination. They kept it in its pristine purity, which is why we have received the teaching in its pure form.

The path leads one from the grossest apparent truth to the subtlest ultimate truth. It is actually the highway that leads one to the highest truth. It does not lead one to blind alleys where one keeps on groping for the truth in the darkness and has to be satisfied with only apparent truths and not the ultimate truth. Nor does one get stuck at a half-way stop thinking or imagining it to be the ultimate truth.

The mind is filled with deep gratitude for the Venerable Ledi Sayadaw, who was the brightest star in the chain of teachers of the last century. My heart is also filled with gratitude for the lay teacher Saya Thetgyi who carried out this responsibility in such an exemplary way.

Gurudev! both my heart and mind are filled with deep gratitude for you. You gave the gift of this invaluable Dhamma-jewel to me with such a compassionate heart!

What would have been my state if I had not received this jewel of Dhamma? I would have wasted my life accumulating wealth and riches and in the competitive rat race for establishing my social status. Even if I had turned towards Dhamma, I would have got trapped in the shackles of some sectarian belief as my adornment. I would have wasted my life puffed up with the pride of knowledge based on others’ experiences. How could I have developed the right view born out of experiential knowledge of true Dhamma? I would have been compelled to think of some kind of imagination as the right view and would have been satisfied with it. How would I have gotten the right view through the actual experience of things as they are? I would have wasted away this precious human life by just performing rites and rituals, saying prayers, reading scriptures, singing hymns, or believing in philosophies and views not based on personal experience.

Gurudev! You made my human birth worth while by giving me the gift of this supreme, and unparalleled, Dhamma.

Truly, this Dhamma practice is the supreme and unparalleled path. How straight, how clear, how scientific, and how benevolent! It takes one from bondage to liberation, from illusion to reality! This is the path that takes one from the apparent truth to the ultimate truth! May the purity of such invaluable Dhamma remain in its pristine form! This is my great wish and firm resolve on this auspicious day. May I not commit any offence of any kind by mixing this pure Dhamma with anything spurious, even by mistake. May this invaluable treasure remain in its immaculate form! And by its practice, may the people attain Nibbana!

It is in this way that we can truly express our gratitude for you. This is the best way to pay homage to you.

Your humble Dhamma Son,
Satya Narayan Goenka

Vesak, May 26, 2013



FORM IV

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2. In addition there are Daily One-Day Courses being held in the Pagoda for Vipassana Students. Please follow the link to join and take advantage of the immense benefit of meditating in a large group. Contact: 022 50427500 (Board Lines) Mob. +91 8291894644 (from 11 am to 5 pm).

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*Jana-jana ke kalyāṇa hita, stūpa sthāpanā hoyā;
 Jāge viśva vipaśyanā, jana-mana maṅgala hoyā.*

The Pagoda has been built, for the highest welfare of all, May Vipassana arise in the world, and benefit all beings.

*Patthara-patthara joḍa kara, liyā caitya cinavāya;
 Jisake nīce baiṭha kara, dhyāna kare sukha pāya.*

The Pagoda was created one stone at a time, Sitting in which one can experience the joy of meditation.

*Isa maṅgalamaya stūpa se, dharma prakāśita hoyā;
 Jana-jana kā hita-sukha sadhe, bhalā viśva kā hoyā.*

May Dhamma shine from this beneficent Stup, Bringing beneficial joy to everyone, and spreading happiness throughout the world.

*Patra puṣpa naivedya se, chichalā vandana hoyā;
 Karen vipaśyanā sādhanā, sahī vandanā hoyā.*

Flower, petal, and fruit offerings are shallow forms of homage, The best tribute is to practise Vipassana meditation.

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