The following is a translation of an article by S. N. Goenka published in the October 2005 issue of the Vipassana Patrika. It has been adapted for the Vipassana Newsletter.

1 September 1955! An extremely important day of my life! The incurable and unbearable migraine headaches, which had been a terrible curse, now became a boon for me. I joined the Vipassana meditation course of my revered teacher, Sayagyi U Ba Khin, for ten days. I had serious doubts about the course. Still I went for the course and gained astonishing benefits from the course. This is well known.

My main reservation about Vipassana was that it was a Buddhist meditation technique. What if it made me leave my Hindu religion? What if I became a Buddhist? Surely I would go astray and become debased if I left my religion! Though I had devotion towards the Buddha, I had nothing but disdain for his teaching! Even then I joined the course because Sayagyi convinced me that in the Vipassana course, nothing else would be taught other than sīla (morality), concentration of mind (samādhi) and wisdom (paññā). How could a Hindu like me or any person of any religion object to morality, concentration of mind and wisdom?

Living a life of morality, developing mastery over the mind and purifying the mind by developing wisdom—how can any reasonable person object to these three teachings? I wanted to get rid of my mental defilements such as anger and egoism that resulted in a life full of tension and was the root cause of the migraine headaches. In addition, the family in which I was born resulted in a life full of tension and was the root cause of the migraine headaches. In the first course itself, my spiritual search was fully satisfied. I found Vipassana so pure that I did not feel the necessity to go anywhere else in search of another meditation technique. It was truly benevolent.

During the long motor home pilgrimage for 111 days in Amerika-Canada in 2002, respected Guruji and Mitaji answering questions after discourse in a program.

He who seeks refuge in the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha, and who sees with true insight the four Noble Truths: Suffering, the Arising of Suffering, the Cessation of Suffering and the Noble Eight-fold Path which leads to the Cessation of Suffering.

This, indeed, is the secure refuge. This, indeed, is the supreme refuge. Seeking such refuge one is released from all sorrow.
Goenkaji in Dubai, U.A.E.

Goenkaji has been travelling around the world for the spread of Dhamma for many years. Most of these travels have been during the Indian monsoon season. Earlier, he used to visit the West more often but of late, responding to the enthusiasm for Dhamma in certain Asian regions, he has been travelling more in Asia. Old age and age-related health issues play an important role in his itinerary. These allow him less and less time for the various Dhamma projects he has taken up. Usually, Goenkaji gets more free time for his writing during his stay at the Nepal Vipassana Centre, Kathmandu and in Dubai.

The main focus of Goenkaji’s work has always been the practical aspect of the Buddha’s teaching. The centuries-old misconceptions about the Buddha’s teaching in India need to be removed in order to put his teaching in the right context and to facilitate the spread of Vipassana. As long as these misconceptions have currency in society, people hesitate to learn and practise Vipassana. To counter the misunderstandings Goenkaji has written many essays and books such as “Was the Buddha a Pessimist?”

A false allegation against the Buddha that has been making the rounds for centuries is that he is a nastik— a term with a strong derogatory connotation that has meant different things at different times in the history in India. Nastik may be loosely translated as nonbeliever in English. It implies that if someone is a nastik, those who follow him will be led astray. In the past few months, Goenkaji has undertaken an in-depth study to analyse the evolution of the term and its impact on the teaching of the Buddha and other teachers. Goenkaji also studied the usage of nastik and its implications in the times before the Buddha and after the Buddha, which involved the comparative study of various spiritual traditions in India. This study has culminated in the writing of the book “Kya Buddha Nastik The?” (Was the Buddha an unorthodox?). This book, in Hindi, will be available to meditators by the end of 2005. When Goenkaji and Mataji arrived in Dubai on August 11, completion of this book was the primary object. During his stay in Dubai, he was able to review related literature and has almost completed writing this detailed work.

Though Goenkaji spent most of his time on this book, he also worked on several other topics during this period. He edited the booklet on the royal physician Jivaka who was also the Buddha’s physician. This booklet titled Agrapala Rajayidya Jivaka will be published shortly. Goenkaji also wrote an essay on his natural mother. (Goenkaji was adopted by his paternal uncle and aunt during his childhood. His article on the death of his adoptive mother has been published in the Vipassana Newsletter.) He also edited a book on the King of Magadha, Bimbisara which is mostly a compilation of his earlier articles on the king and his family. Bimbisara was the first king to become a disciple of the Buddha and attained the stage of stream-enterer (sotāpanna). Vipassana meditators in the rapidly growing city of Dubai were delighted to have Goenkaji among them. They were able to meditate with him at the weekly group sitting at the end of which he would answer a few selected questions. One mediator, who has been meditating for many years, had only recently come from the USA to work as a professor in a local university. She came to the group sitting not realising that it would be conducted by Goenkaji. Needless to say, she then joined all the subsequent group sittings.

A ten-day course was held in August at a temporary campsite in a neighbouring Emirate. 28 August was the mettā day of this course. In spite of cautionary words from his assistants about his ill-health, Goenkaji insisted on making the journey to give the mettā session live to the students on this course. After the mettā session, he met the students and Dhamma servers for almost an hour. One mediator from Kerala, who had joined a ten-day course for the first time, asked Goenkaji, “I joined the course because one of my friends in Mumbai told me about it. Now I have experienced firsthand what a wonderful teaching this is! Why is it not widely known in Kerala? This must spread in Kerala!” Goenkaji laughed and told him that it is the meditators who spread awareness about Vipassana, organize courses and establish centres. This student’s enthusiasm was not empty. Within a few days, he approached Goenkaji requesting a brief interview for an English programme on the Malayalam channel, Asianet. On 5 September, he recorded Goenkaji’s interview.

On 11 September, Goenkaji gave a public talk in Hindi at the Sindhi Ceremonial Centre. The topic was “Vipassana—Sukhi Jivan ka Vigyan.” After the talk he answered questions for more than half an hour. On 15 September, he recorded an interview for “Dubai Eye”, a local radio station. On 29 September, he gave a public talk in English at the Sindhi Ceremonial Centre on “Vipassana—the Science of Happiness” and then answered questions from the audience.

Awareness of Vipassana is spreading in the Middle East and there are regular group sittings in Bahrain and Muscat. Meditators from the neighbouring countries of Oman and
Bahrain came for a group sitting to Dubai. The meditators who were instrumental in organizing a ten-day course in Bahrain recently came to meet Goenkaji and sought guidance from him. Goenkaji and Mataji returned to Bombay on 8 October after a very fruitful stay.

May all beings be happy!

Celebrating 50 Years of the Journey of Dhamma
A program at the Global Pagoda in Dec. 2019

As you all know that the 50th Year has come to pass, to celebrate this Golden Milestone, a mega event is being planned at the closing of this year on Dec 15-16, 2019 at the Global Vipassana Pagoda.

One objective of the program is to bring Vipassana meditators from all over the world, together at one place for a mega group sitting and metta to strengthen the practice of Dhamma. The other is to collectively reflect on the past 50 years and outline the vision for the coming 50 years. In this two-day event, we shall also hold discussions around Vipassana and Buddha’s discourses, as well as sharing memories of old meditators who worked closely with Guruj for Dhamma Work. We request you all to kindly attend the event

Please register before coming. You can use following method:
WhatsApp - 82918 94644; SMS - 82918 94645
Website: (The link for the same will be provided next month.)

Basic Diploma & Advanced Diploma Courses on the teachings of the Buddha: Vipassana practice and its theoretical aspects.

Vipassana Research Institute (VRI) and University of Mumbai (Dept. of Philosophy) jointly conduct these courses on theoretical and practical aspects of the Buddha’s teachings, and practical application of Vipassana in various fields. Duration of course: 22-June-2019 to March 2020. Classes: every Saturday 2:00 to 6:00 pm. Eligibility: Min. 12th pass / old SSC. [By the end of first term, students go to a 10-day Vipassana course as a part of curriculum] Admissions from 12th to 15th June, 2019 between 11am to 2pm at Philosophy Department,

VRI Office. Telephone: 022-50427560 or 28451204 Ext: 560

For more information contact: 1) VRI office 022 50427560, 9619234126 (9:30am- 5:30pm), 2) Mrs Baljit Lamba – 9833518979, 3) Ms. Rajeshree - 9004698648, 4) Mrs. Alka Vengurlekar – 98237 19321 or Dhamma Punna: 020- 24468903, Online Registration: http://punna.vridhamma.org/ctec workshop.php

Hearing and Speech Impaired
Children - Workshop

Children courses for Hearing and Speech Impaired (HSI) children - CCT and Dhamma Sevaks Workshop on 29th August to 1st September 2019 (Starts- 29th August 5 pm & Ends 1st September 5 pm);

Address: DhammaPunna - Vipassana Meditation Center, Near Anand Mangal karyalay, Opp. Nehru Stadium, Dadawadi, Swargate, Pune- 411002.

For more details Please Contact: Sunanda Rathi: 9371177265, Sangeeta Shinde: 98237 19321 or Dhamma Punna: 020- 24468903, Online Registration: http://punna.vridhamma.org/ctec workshop.php

New Vipassana Centre in Solapur
Dhamma Siddhappuri, Bhategaon, off Viparaj Road, Near Bhate Wadi, Soregam-Dodgam Raod, Solapur. Pin: - 413002
(Notes: Auto Riksha from Bus stand and Solapur station to Soregana are available for drop to Center.)

Regn. Contact: Mr. Samrat Patil- Phone: +917620592920 & +919019080080; Email: solapurvipassana@gmail.com

Those who want to develop their parriames helping this center, may do so.

Account Details: Solapur Vipassana Meditation Centre; Bank- State Bank of India; Account No.: 35748316844; IFSC no. SBIN0016894

Children’s Meditation Courses in Mumbai

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<th>Age 10-16, Registration 2 days before the Course, i.e. Thursday &amp; Friday</th>
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<td>First Sunday</td>
<td>Ulhasnagar, Churchgate, Thane, khar, Wadala, Matunga</td>
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<td>Second Sunday</td>
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<td>Third Sunday</td>
<td>Thane, Ghatkopar, D. Vipula</td>
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<td>Fourth Sunday</td>
<td>Arioli, Dhamma Vipula</td>
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“Please call or send a text SMS message with the name & age of the child two days in advance for registration.”

Course Timing: 8:30 am to 2:30 pm.
Registration Timing: 11 am to 1 pm on the specified numbers and dates for each location.

Course Venues:

*Please register on the specified phone numbers. If unable to attend after registration.
*Please Inform in advance.
*Please arrive on time for the course.

Additional Responsibilities
1. Mrs Sabrina Katakan (T) oversees all Teenagers Courses in India, and guide the following team:--
2. Mrs Sunita Dharmadarshini (T)
3. Mr Anil Mehta (SAT)
4. Mrs Kakoli Bhattacharya (SAT)
5. Mrs Amita Parekh (SAT)
6. Mrs Medha Dalvi (AT)

Newly Appointed Assistant Teachers
1. Mrs. Snehal Maduskar, Mumbai
2. Mrs. Shaktunata D. Sheth, Mumbai
3. Mrs. Medha Dalvi, Mumbai
4. Mrs. Kanta Tai Tale, Solapur
5. Mr. Thannickal Gopalan
6. Mrs. Mithilika
7. Mrs. Medha Dalvi
8. Mrs. Shaktunata D. Sheth
9. Mrs. Medha Dalvi

Abhidhamma in Daily Life - Short course for 2019-20.

A short course on ‘Abhidhamma in Daily Life’ will be conducted at VRI under the affiliation of University of Mumbai.

Schedule: Every Saturday; 1 to 4 pm;

Date: Starting from 16-Nov-2019 to 1-Feb 2020;

Educational Qualifications: HSC/Old SSC -- (Passing certificate Photocopy & Name Change Gazette Certificate photocopy (if change in name) & 1 passport size photograph)

The last date of form submission is 8th Nov 2019.

To download the form, go to http://www.vridhamma.org/Theory-And-Practice-Courses

Fill the form, Scan and send it to mumbai@vridhamma.org

VRI Office. Telephone: 022-50427560 or 28451204 Ext: 560

Children’s course teachers
1. Mr. Radheshyam Pandit, Chapara
2. Mr. Ashokit Kumar Sahu, Bilasar
3. Miss Mamta Soni, Durg
4. Miss Linu Dahariya, Durg
5. Ms. Jitinnan Khamjaroen, Thailand
6. Mr. Naro Ty, France
7. Mrs Joana Lataste, France
Centuries Corpus Fund for the Operation of Global Vipassana Pagoda (GVP)

As desired by Guruji, a Centuries Corpus Fund has been set up to meet the daily expenses of GVP. To fulfill this desire of Guruji, Global Vipassana Foundation (GVF) calculated that if each of 8960 persons donates Rs 1,42,694/- then the amount will be Rs 125 crores. The interest earned from this amount will meet its daily expenses. If one cannot deposit this amount at one time one can do it in installments in a year. (Some have deposited money, and it is hoped the full amount will be received soon.)

This is a great occasion for all meditators and non-meditators to increase their parami by contributing to this fund.

- For more information and making contribution please contact: GVF office: 1. Mr. Derik Pegado, 9921227057. or 2. Mr. Bipin Mehta, Mo. 9920052156, A/c. Office: 022-62427512 / 62427510; Email: audits@globalpagoda.org;


The Construction of Dhammalaya 2

To give free accommodation to Dhamma Sevakas and meditators who come to the Global Pagoda for a one-day course from far-off places, Dhammalaya-2 will be constructed soon. Those who want to earn merit by contributing to the construction work should contact at above • GVF address.

DHAMMA DOHA

Hindu hund na bauddha hund, na muslima nai jaina;
Dharmapantha ka pathik hund, sukhri rahi hu dina rain.

I am neither a Hindu, nor a Baudh, nor a Muslim, nor a Jain;
By walking on the path of Dhamma I feel happy day in & day out.

Dharma sadh mangala kare, dharma kare kalyana;
Dharma sadh raktha kare, dharma baagha balvana.

Dhamma always does good, it always makes one happy; It always protects as it is very powerful.

Dharma hamara bandhu hai, sakhti sahayaka mita;
Calen dharma ki rita hi, rahe dharam se prita.

Dhamma is our brother, friend and companion; Walk on the path according to Dhamma and be friendly with it.

Dharma sadh raksha nahi, dharma sadh nahi dhala;
Dharma palakon kai sadh, dharma rahe rakshala.

There is no protector like Dhamma nor there a shield like Dhamma; Dhamma always protects those who live a Dhamic life.

Importance of Lighting a Pagoda

Respected Goenkaji always said that it is of special importance that a Pagoda where relics are kept be well lit throughout the night. This helps maintain the Dhamma atmosphere. Anyone wishing to donate for the lighting of the Global Pagoda may do so. The cost per night is Rs. 5000/-. For further information Contact at • GVF address.

Sañghadhānas at Global Vipassana Pagoda

Sunday 29th September 2019, on the occasion of the death Anniversary of Respected Goenkaji and Sharad Purnima;
Sunday 15th Dec. 2019, on the occasion of Celebrating 50 Years of Dhamma; & 12th January 2020, on the occasion of death Anniversary of Respected Mataji and Sayagyi U Ba Khin are being organized at 9 a.m. respectively. Those who wish to take part in the meritorious Sañghadhāna, they should Contact:
1. Mr Derik Pegado, 9921227057. or 2. Sri Bipin Mehta, Mo. 9920052156, Tel: 022- 62427512 (9:30 AM to 5:30 PM), Email: audits@globalpagoda.org.

One-day Mega courses at Global Vipassana Pagoda for 2019

Sunday 14th July, Ashadhaha-Purnima (Dhammachakka Pravartan day); Sunday 29th September On the occasion of 5th death Anniversary of Rev. Goenkaji & Sharad Purnima. One-day mega course at GVP onwards till 4 pm. Non-meditators may participate in the 3 pm discourse. Please come only with prior registration. Samaggañama tapo sukho: Avail of the immense benefit of meditating in large group. For registration Contact: 022-62427544, 022-28451170- Extn: 9, Mob. 8291894644 (Tel: booking: 11 am to 5 pm daily). Online registration: http://oneday.globalpagoda.org/register

SUBSCRIPTION TO ENGLISH/HINDI MONTHLY NEWSLETTER: ANNUAL: RS 30/- (US $10 OUTSIDE INDIA); LIFE SUBSCRIPTION: RS 500/- (US $100 OUTSIDE INDIA) BY BANK DRAFT, PAYABLE AT IGATPURI IN FAVOUR OF Vipassana Research Institute

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Email: vri_admin@vridhamma.org
course booking: info@giri.dhamma.org
Website: www.vridhamma.org

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