

Vipassana Newsletter

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

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WORDS OF DHAMMA

Atītaṃ nānvāgameyya, nappaṭikaṅkhe anāgataṃ;

Yadatītaṃ pahīnaṃ taṃ, appattaṅca anāgataṃ.

Paccuppannaṅca yo dhammaṃ, tattha tattha vipassati;

Asaṃhāraṃ asaṃkappaṃ, taṃ vidvā manubrūhaye.

M.N. Uparipaṇṇāsapāli, Bhaddekaratta Sutta, 272

Let one not dwell in the past nor live in expectation of the future.

The past is over, the future has not yet arrived. Observe that which is present with insight (into impermanence etc.).

Undistracted and unshakable should the wise one advance.

Faith in Dhamma

“Faith is towards Dhamma and not me. I have Dhamma within and so faith is there. Due to any ignorance, tomorrow if I leave Dhamma, then leave the faith too, don’t keep faith then. Faith is always for Dhamma. Since so many years I have been serving here. Nothing that is against the Dhamma has been done till now. So, having faith is natural. I thank you for your faith.

There is some force, some power in Dhamma, due to which everyone likes it, it has power to do auspicious things. Welfare will be for all. It will not discriminate that this one is a follower of my sect, so may they get welfare; those who are from a different sect may get difficulties... then it’s not Dhamma, it is another sect only.

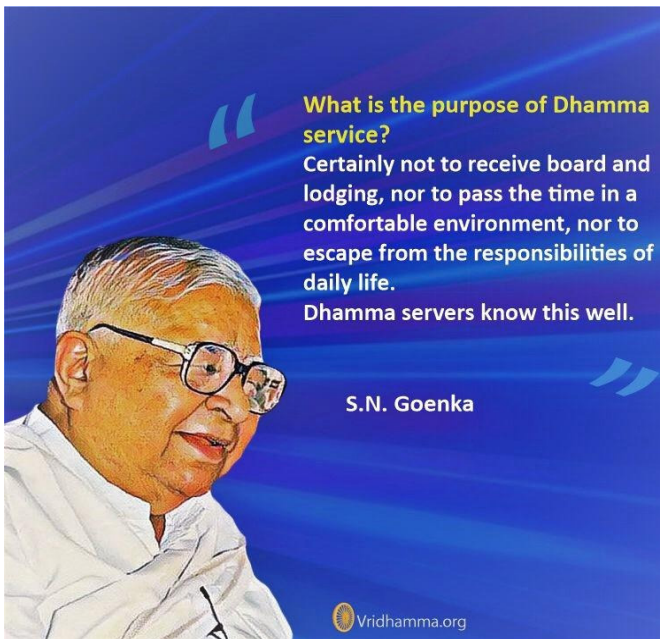
Buddha did not allow his teaching to be of any sect. That was the specialty of the Buddha. We have to maintain that specialty; Dhamma should be maintained forever.”

(– S.N.Goenka Q&A: International AT Meeting 2012 at Dhammagiri) -----

We pay our respects to our Teacher on the occasion of his Death Anniversary, 29th September, (2013).



Mr. S.N. Goenka (1924 – 2013) and Mrs. Illaichidevi (Mataji-1929 – 2016) giving metta on the roof of Dhamma Hall no. 1.



Success Among Initial Difficulties

(Correspondence with Babu Bhaiya continued)

Excerpts from the first part of this letter from Goenkaji to his brother Babupulal Goenka (Babu Bahiya) detailing the third Vipassana camp to be held in India in 1969, were published last month in the VNL. In this issue, we include additional excerpts of Goenkaji's impressions of some of the participating meditators which he sent to his elder brother for passing along to and seeking guidance from Sayagyi U Ba Khin in Myanmar. – The Editor.

Nemaniwadi Bhavan Camp Details (Mumbai) –
August 1969

New Delhi – 29th Sept 1969

Babu Bhaiya,

Pranam! (Greetings!)

... A meditator known to me who suffered from some mental disturbance arrived in this camp, and I came to know just a few minutes before the camp was to start that he too intended to sit for the course. Nearly everyone sitting the course had arrived by then and I could not say no to him. I thought, "Let him sit. I will not put extra attention on him. And who knows, if he gains even a little parami it will be to his benefit." To my consternation I saw that

during the introductory Anapana session itself he began to behave abnormally. As I gave Anapana instructions, he started breathing heavily which had to be stopped. However, when I spoke to him, I did not find any indication of an unbalanced mind. From time to time I would find myself feeling metta towards him with the wish that he may fulfill his Dhamma undertaking. But as the course progressed, the impact of the meditation became too strong and unbearable for him. One day his brother-in-law came to check on him and insisted that he wanted to take him home. Having accepted him as a participant and then having him leave was a matter of deep regret for me....

My father had successfully attended the previous Vipassana course, yet his awareness of sensations, having grown weaker with time, had faded away. He had reverted back to his daily two hour religious practice which included chanting mantras. I was apprehensive that upon returning home he would return to practising these religious rituals and again lose awareness of sensations. While in the camp he would succeed in awakening mild sensations and at times strong ones, but as soon as he relaxed his body or lay down, due to a backache which ailed him, the sensations would fade away. I had to encourage him repeatedly to keep trying. Upon returning home, whenever he sat with me he was able to meditate though not very deeply. I realised that he could not stay away from his religious practices and rituals, hence before leaving I firmly advised him to at least stay away from mantras for the duration of three Vipassana camps. How far he follows that remains to be seen

My mother's situation was different. For her the camp turned out to be very beneficial. The constant headache that she suffered from had become considerably reduced and her awareness of Vipassana awakened deeply. By the 7th or 8th day, she experienced very fine and subtle sensations and by the end of the course she felt very light. I was not worried that she would ever revert back and lose herself in her rituals. I am trying my best to fulfill my karmic debt by bringing my parents to the path of pure Dhamma.

This was the second course for Mr M. and he benefitted more from his meditation this time than on his first course; he felt that his entire family

should benefit from this blessed Dhamma. In the middle of the course, he came to me repeatedly and requested that I should visit his family and give them an inspiring discourse so that they too would embrace Vipassana and leave aside the tantra path that they were involved in. Last time too he had pleaded with me, but I had been unable to visit his house. Now I agreed and at the end of the course his son drove me to their house in Malad, about two hours away from South Bombay. On the way we visited his new house in the suburbs which was under construction and then reached his home where his entire family had assembled. While giving a discourse I narrated the story of Mother Visakha and highlighted how a householder remains alert to his responsibilities while progressing on the path of Dhamma; that it was not necessary to leave home and become a renunciate. At the end the family members asked a number of questions including ones related to mantras and chants. Finally, they made repeated requests to hold a camp at their new house where they could all participate. Bound by my tight schedule it was difficult for me to make any commitment to them.

I previously mentioned Mr R. He was the student in Madras who had become upset during a discourse. However, by the end of that camp, he was deeply drawn to Dhamma and now he had returned with his wife. In During the initial couple of days, he had to leave the camp to go out for some work, but subsequently he settled down to work seriously. Now as he deepened in his meditation practice and his mind was purified, the veil of false ideas crumbled and truth became apparent. He benefitted so much that at the end he met me in my office and bowing down, he asked for blessings to be free of the debt of birth to his mother. That day during the discourse I had said that a child cannot easily become free of parental debt even if he or she serves them for many lifetimes. However, there is a way to become free which is if the child helps to get them established in Dhamma so that they walk the path of liberation. He expressed a desire to bring his mother to the camp in Sarnath but due to familial constraints he could not come, though he mentioned that during future courses in Madras, he may be able to come with his mother.

He also informed two close friends of his from Bikaner, Rajasthan, about the upcoming course

in Sarnath and that they should make the most of this blessed opportunity. Filled with excitement they came to visit me on the day the camp was to start. Perhaps they were disappointed upon seeing a householder instead of some imagined bearded and robed sadhu because as the camp was to start that evening, instead of returning as they had promised, they sent a message expressing their inability to attend.

A young man Mr M. could not focus even briefly during Anapana, remaining quite confused. When I questioned him he complained about pain in his legs and thighs and he sat with a pillow under his legs. What suddenly sparked his interest was that three to four days after receiving Vipassana his leg ache disappeared. He could easily sit in adhitthana for an hour and his restless mind had began to quieten down. As his mind calmed down, he became deeply attentive to the discourses. In the end he expressed a desire to attend another camp, this time with his wife. He will possibly come to one of the future courses.

Mr RC. had undertaken a 10-day Vipassana course in Burma, but upon his return to India he had become involved in tantra, getting himself into a very confused state. Yet there was a seed of wisdom nestled within and he rushed to attend this course after being asked to do so by his father. Certainly there were initial difficulties as the tantric mantras resonated in his mind. During Anapana he grew restless and reported his head seemed about to burst. But by the end of the third day he began to see light, indicating progress. I had given Vipassana to old students on Sunday afternoon but encouraged him to work with Anapana up until Monday so that he could become free from his obstacles. I feel that to be well established in Vipassana he will have to attend one more course.

Mr L. was participating in his second Vipassana camp and very successfully at that. The shallow Vipassana of his previous course now flowed piercingly and he went deeper. One positive aspect that remained firm now, as before, was that he could sit still for over two hours even during Anapana. Later he came up to me and spoke in private about his younger brother, saying that he had been very keen to join the course but could not do so due to financial constraints. This bothered me a lot. Truly, in the metropolitan areas our camps were proving to be expensive indeed. The

cost of food and accommodation for 10 days was prohibitive, discouraging those from middle and lower classes from taking leave from their jobs and spending for camps. I felt that these camps should not become an exclusive domain of the rich and should be organized with minimal expense. This was a difficult proposition in cities like Bombay where Rs. 500 was spent on rent alone for a guest house, while Rs. 100 to 200 was spent on cooking vessels, then of course came groceries and workers' expenses. And if the organizers spent freely, then the matter became even more difficult. Certainly, having ultra-rich participants with their innumerable demands concerning food and who were not concerned with the expense, did not help. I regretted their attitude of being 'VIP guests', yet found it difficult to get firm with them as they would push my father forward as their spokesperson and it would get difficult for me to cross his path. Yet, the bothersome thought had remained with me that this meditation path should not become the domain of the rich.

After the course in Sarnath, I was greatly relieved to see that with arrangements in careful hands the camps could be organized with much less expenditure, thereby encouraging the lower strata of society to participate freely. Now there is hope that this course in Delhi will not be as costly as the Bombay one was.

On the last day, which was Sunday, the final discourse was held in the Dhamma Hall from 6:30 to 7:00 p.m. after the group sitting. This time there was an unusually large number of people that had assembled. I felt this was due to the meritorious power of the 10-days of meditation. The Dhamma discourse carried the listeners in its flow kindling a positive response and there were many requests to organise another course.

When the discourse ended, another difficulty presented itself. When the meditators fold their hands and bow down to me, I take it to be their respect towards the Dhamma that they have received. So even when very elderly people bow down it does not make me uncomfortable. I see in their bowing to me the respect of Dhamma, the respect of my guru Sayagyi whose Dhamma mission I fulfill as his representative.

But when people who have not received Dhamma-dana from me come and touch my

feet, as per the Indian custom, I feel differently. Once the discourse was over this happened and I did not know what to do, but I truly wish that when anyone wants to express his respect, he would bow down touching five body parts to the floor, the way Burmese people do and not touch the teacher's feet like Indians do. So deep rooted is this custom in India that it seems difficult to inculcate it here, though it should really be done.

After staying in Bombay for a day and a half, I left for Nagpur by train. Among the few people who came to the station to see me off were my old friends Kumar and Hariram [the father-in-law of Girdhari, Goenkaji's eldest son]. They were very keen to have one more camp in Bombay in which they wanted to participate. I told them that this was what I was here for – to give this gift of the most precious jewel of Dhamma to my relatives, friends and others like them. Who knows when their desire will be fulfilled!

At the conclusion of the Bombay course, I shared the merits with all beings including devas and brahmas whose support and protection we had received. I also shared the merits with my deeply respected guru Sayagyi and Mother Sayama as well whose blessings and metta had supported the successful conclusion of this camp. And then I shared the merits with you all in Burma and our Indian friends and associates whose support and goodwill has remained invaluable.

During the discourse, the owners of this guest house, the Nemani brothers, were amongst the listeners. Afterwards, they expressed their keenness for another course. I was a little apprehensive as, to avoid distracting the students, I had covered with cloth the large pictures of their ancestors that hung on the walls. And those white, shroud-like curtains were still hanging there covering the pictures. But the Dhamma feeling of these Nemani family members was so strong that this action did not appear offensive to them. Such people, filled with eager desire towards Dhamma should certainly be given Dhamma-dana.

Your Brother,

Satya Narayan Goenka

(Excerpts from correspondence with Babu Bhaiya)...

To be continued ...



Autobiography continues

The previous vignettes from the life of the world renowned Vipassana teacher Mr. Satyanarayan Goenka, were from the days prior to, and just after his coming into contact with pure Dhamma. Now we move ahead to the period of his teaching courses in India. We offer this series from his autobiography so that it may inspire others. **NL Part – 18.**

The Theory of Ever-Changing-Reality

About 15 years ago, a Vipassana camp was held in Kutch district, Gujarat. By then the word had spread that Vipassana was not being taught with the aim to convert people from one organised religion to another, but rather, was being taught so that students could eradicate mental impurities like craving and aversion. It was being practised by one and all who were experiencing immediate benefits. Also, it was clear to all that on the courses there were no rites and rituals used and no false promises were made to aspirants pertaining to attractions of this world or a world beyond. In addition there was no appeal to follow a given philosophy blindly, nor any exaggerated claims of the master being a Brahma who would personally lead everyone beyond the morass of existence, thereby confusing seekers to deposit their faith blindly in someone to lift them up.

In addition, it came to be known that neither the teacher nor the organisers had any selfish agenda and the meditation courses were organised with but one motto: the welfare of one and all. The course participants learned that Vipassana was a technique which actively weakened the mental defilements which were suffused with craving and aversion until they were fully eradicated. In line with a student's sincerity, the student benefitted, and benefitted immediately from a scientific technique free from sectarian beliefs.

Convinced of this simple and straightforward truth regarding the teaching, not only householders but also renunciates – ascetics, bhikkhus and bhikkhunis, priests and nuns from various sects and creeds – joined the camps in large numbers. This highlighted the fact that the teaching was not bound by any one community or sect as everyone wants to be free of anger,

craving and other defilements.

So long as defilements persist, unwholesome acts are bound to occur at the verbal or bodily levels. Goodwill, compassion and empathy are unable to arise within without purity of mind. Every religious tradition promotes a life of righteous values and discipline and a mental state that is virtuous and wholesome. Vipassana shows the way to achieve this. It is unlikely that one will reach the final destination after attending just a camp or two, but a person gets the road map, the path to liberation on which he or she is able to progress, step by step.

This certainly was the reason that almost 40 ascetics and nuns from a certain sect walked nearly 150 miles to participate in a camp. However, shortly before the camp was to commence, the householder head of their sangha arrived and let loose his fury on them. He shamed them questioning how they could even think of learning the dhamma of impermanence from a householder and what's more, from one who belonged to another religion? “What will happen to our dharma!” he exclaimed.

It was very unfortunate that the leader of this particular sangha happened to be a householder who, with his financial power, controlled these ascetics and nuns. He could, if he so desired, proclaim in the community that a certain renunciate should not be given dana or bhiksha, nor shelter in the designated religious rest-houses. As these ascetics were controlled in this way by this householder, it did not come as any surprise that even though these monks had walked so many miles to join the camp, they decided not to attend.

Some nuns from another religious community did join the camp. On the third evening during the discourse while explaining paññā, I said that the entire physical body and the mind are so very ephemeral, changing every moment, and changing so rapidly that one feels that it is the same body, the same being. As an example I said it is just like the flame in a lamp which rises and falls every moment so rapidly, leading us to believe that it is the same flame. Or like the electricity in a tube-light, which moves with such great rapidity that we are led to believe that it is the same current; or the river that ever flows on,

giving rise to the feeling that it is the same water, but no, that water has flowed on and new water has entered the river. Similarly, life changes every moment, and we feel that it is the same life momentum. A baby is born and turns into a youth, then an adult grows old and dies. This change is occurring every single moment. When we cling to this ever-changing phenomena calling it 'me' and 'mine', then aversion and clinging arise.

As I was expounding on this philosophy I saw that the head nun who was sitting in front was getting uncomfortable. The next day she came to me and said, "We had heard that the Buddhists are believers of the phenomena of 'reality that is changing every moment'. What's more, we had also heard that you were not like them, that you reveal the true and pure aspect of Dhamma to your students. But in yesterday's talk you put so much emphasis on this philosophy of 'ever-changing-reality.' It is very difficult for us to meditate in such an atmosphere." I was nonplussed.

I explained that a believer of the philosophy of 'ever-changing-reality' (*kshanikvāḍ*) is one who says that there is no way out of this phenomena, as there is nothing beyond this reality that this change is constant, permanent. But Vipassana takes us to that destination that is 'ever permanent', the one that 'never changes'. She was surprised and said, "We had heard that the followers of the Buddha did not believe in the Eternal, the Unchanging. That everything for them is forever changing, ephemeral. This is the Buddhist philosophy that has been taught to us."

So I explained again that the ephemeral, the ever-changing-reality is to be known at the experiential level in order to disassociate oneself from clinging to it. This is so that one is not deluded into believing that this ever-changing phenomena is 'me', 'mine' or 'my soul.' Equanimity will deepen with this understanding at the experiential level while craving and aversion will weaken. The more clinging towards craving and aversion weakens, the closer we move towards that which is Permanent.

When the mind is full of such cloying impurities, it is impossible to realise the Permanent, Unchanging state even though that remains the goal. That state cannot be imagined,

it has to be experienced and the impurity within is the major obstruction. This teaching is to eradicate that impurity. The head nun was then reassured that the ever-changing phenomena alone was not the focus here, that the Permanent was acknowledged and indeed, all effort was directed towards it. By the end of ten days she felt even further reassured. Once this apprehension was out of the way, she progressed well.

The false allegation that the philosophy of the 'reality-that-changes-every-moment' exists in the Buddha's teachings is just as baseless as the one regarding 'ephemeral phenomena' or the belief that 'suffering is the sole reality'. Who knows which unwise one spoke the words: "Sarvaṃ dukhaṃ, dukhaṃ, kshanikaṃ, kshanikaṃ." – "All is misery, misery, every moment, every moment." And then falsely quoted it as the Buddha's teaching.

When this propaganda began, it is very possible that there was no one to counter it and present the truth as spoken by the Buddha properly; as neither the original teachings nor the Vipassana technique were available, lost as they were. It is also possible that someone may have made feeble efforts to put forward the true picture, but when the philosophical arguments were put forth by fierce opponents in a public arena, then a weak presenter's argument goes unheard, just like the sound of a tiny flute trying to rise above the din of a large orchestra.

However, these conjectures remain buried in history. Today, our country has welcomed Vipassana once again. The original, pure teachings of the Buddha are available once again. While practising and studying these, we must not fall prey to the false belief that the Buddha's teachings merely remain in the domain of the 'reality-changing-every-moment'. That which is momentary, a passing reality, should never be considered as the permanent, indivisible reality, since one would then run the risk of getting lost and confused once again. What is, must be accepted at all times. To see anicca, the ephemeral, as nitya, the Unchanging, is to mislead oneself.

The Unchanging, the ever-present-reality beyond mind and matter, beyond the senses, will be revealed when one works with proper focus to change the behaviour pattern of the mind that

has been ever submerged in craving and aversion throughout innumerable lifetimes, and learns at the experiential level the reality of anicca, the ephemeral, changing every moment. Beyond it, when the permanent reality, the Never-Changing-Truth reveals itself, then alone will one accept it as such. Before that time, to consider the ever-changing-reality as the permanent one is to fool oneself. Vipassana shows us the way.

(from the Autobiography of Mr. S.N. Goenka) –

To be continued...



Dhammic Demise

Teacher, Narayan O. Patil of Dhule, Maharashtra, passed away peacefully in Pune on 7th Sept 2020 around 11 am. He was 75 years of age. Shortly after he had begun his practice of Vipassana in 1987, he retired from his government position of 16 years preferring self-employment and immersed himself in Dhamma work. Being appointed an Assistant Teacher in 1991 and then Teacher in 1997, he conducted many landmark

courses, namely, a number of courses for the blind and for those suffering from leprosy, as well as giving service on jail courses. He also helped in the construction of Dhammagiri and Dhamma Tapovana and contributed in the development of the centre in Dhule, Dhamma Sarovar, where wholeheartedly he continued giving significant support together with his wife, Rama. The Dhamma family wishes that he continues to progress on the Dhamma path.

May he be peaceful, happy and liberated.



Newly Appointed SATs

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. Ms. Kamolrat Kitmanee, Thailand | 2. Mr. Prem Kumar Shakya, Nepal |
| 2. Ms. Piyawan Ukamthorn, Thailand | 3. Mr. Govinda Ram Adhikari, Nepal |
| 3. Mr. Nikhom Chaiwongsaen, Thailand | 4. Ms. Rewadee Kongtiam, Thailand |

Assistant Teachers

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Ms. Hetal Ahir, Thailand | Anjar(Kutch)+ RCCC for Kutch Gujarat |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|

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Anapana for Children, ages 8 - 16 Years – VRI can conduct online 70 Min Anapana sessions.

Please write to – childrencourse@vridhamma.org for dedicated sessions for Schools and other Educational institutions and for the schedule of online sessions.



Future Course Schedule and Applications

Information on all future Courses is available on the net. All types of bookings are being made available online only as per the Government's new rules due to Covid-19. Applications will not be accepted on paper. Therefore, you are requested to check the following link and apply online directly for your appropriate course or for dhamma service.

<https://www.dhamma.org/en/schedules/schgiri>

Please apply similarly as per the schedule of other centres. Here is link for all Indian centres:

<https://www.dhamma.org/en-US/locations/directory#IN>

PALI-HINDI (45 DAYS) / PALI-ENGLISH (60 DAYS)

Both **Pali-Hindi** and **Pali-English** Residential courses conducted by VRI for the year 2020 have been cancelled in the wake of the covid-19 pandemic.

VRI plans to start an **Online Pali-English** course soon. The dates and details of the course will be displayed on the VRI Website by the end of this month.

VRI started an Online Pali-Hindi course on 6th April 2020. The recorded sessions of the course from the beginning are available on the VRI Website, www.

vridhamma.org. For further details contact: mumbai@vridhamma.org. Tel.: +91 96192 34126 / +91 (22) 50427560 / +91 (22) 28451204 560 (9:30 AM to 5:30 PM only).

One-day Mega courses at Global Vipassana Pagoda for 2020 / 2021

Sundays— on the occasions of **10th January, 2021** Mataji's Death Anniversary and Sayagyi 'U Ba Khin's Death Anniversary; **23rd May, Buddha Purnima; 25th July, Ashadhi Purnima; 26th September, Sharad Purnima** and **Goenkaji's Death Anniversary**; All are **One-day Mega courses** at GVP start at 11am till 4 pm. Non-meditators may participate in the 3 pm discourse. (**Daily one-day courses still held at Pagoda for those who are staying in the campus.**) Please come only with prior registration. **Samaggānaṃ tapo sukho:** Take advantage of the immense benefit of meditating in a 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>

(All courses will be arranged as per the Government's rules pertaining to Covid-19)

DHAMMA DOHA

Sulaga rahe haim jala rahe, loka aura paraloka;

Capala taramgita kāmṇamaya, kṣaṇa-bhaṇṅgura saba loka.

This world and the celestial world all are burning;
All existences are ephemeral, unsteady, tremulous wavelets.

Aṃtara jhāṃkī dekha lī, kucha bhī sāśvata nāya;

Yaha to sarita pravāha sā, kṣaṇa-kṣaṇa bahatā jāya.

Look within and see there is nothing which is permanent; It is like a river which flows on and on every moment.

Bīte kṣaṇa meṃ jī rahe, yā jo āyā nāya;

Isa kṣaṇa meṃ jīteṃ agara, to jīnā ā jāya.

Not by dwelling on past moments that are gone or on future moments to come; But only by living in the present moment does one learn the art of living.

Mānava jīvana ratana sā, jāya vṛthā na bīta;

Caleṃ mukti ke paṃtha para, rahe dharama se prīta.

The jewel of human life, may it not go to waste; Walking on the path of liberation, may we remain immersed in Dhamma.

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