

Vipassana Newsletter

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

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WORDS OF DHAMMA

*Na jaccā vasalo hoti, na jaccā hoti Brāhmano;
Kammuno vasalo hoti, kammuna hoti Brahmano.*

— Suttanipatapali- 142, Vasalasutta.

Not by birth is one an outcast; not by birth is one a brahman. By (one's) action one is an outcast, by (one's) action one is a brahman.

50th anniversary of the Return and Spread of Dhamma: A great occasion to express gratitude to our teacher Shri Goenkaji

We have strongly resolved to celebrate the Golden Jubilee 50th anniversary of the return and the spread of Vipassana, July 3, 2018 to July 2, 2019, throughout the year. It is hoped that this will be helpful in strengthening the daily practice of all students of Goenkaji. To this end, a one-day course will be held, daily, at the Global Vipassana Pagoda throughout the year. Old Students can avail the benefits of these courses on any day. In other places also people will celebrate this Golden Jubilee ceremony by meditating and practicing Dhamma even more seriously. This will be a true expression of gratitude to respected Shri S. N. Goenkaji.

In the newsletter, we are giving a brief life sketch of Goenkaji in his own words based on his Autobiography...
NL Part -3

Profound Faith in Lord Krishna

Continued ...

In the business sphere, I became the head of the 'Marwari Chamber of Commerce' and then after obtaining Burma citizenship, I headed the 'Rangoon Chamber of Commerce and Industries' and was also a member of the advisory committee in the Commerce Ministry of U Aung during the U Nu Government.

I expanded the family business and established many new ventures with tremendous success. Owing to very good relations with the authorities, I was sent overseas twice with government delegations where we achieved unexpectedly good results.

This remarkable success was but due I felt to my devotion to Lord Krishna. The picture that I put in my shirt pocket as a child remained in my pocket, even when I travelled overseas. I was deeply influenced by the heart-melting devotion of the spiritual books of famed publisher Gita Press from Gorakhpur in India; and would sit daily with tears in my eyes in front of this picture for half an hour, singing bhajans (devotional songs) and remained immersed in devotional joy throughout the day. The belief that dedication to my Krishna was helping me every step of the way through life grew stronger with time

I studied in a Khalsa (Sikh) school from the third to the tenth standard and though the sacred chants of Sikhs (Guru Vani) had influenced me, what influenced me more were the words of the Arya Samaj (reformist Hindu movement) whose headquarter was close to my home. Although their idea of worshipping an unmanifest, abstract god did not impress me as I was immersed in the worship of a manifest god with form and attributes, but many other beliefs of theirs left a major impact on me.



Respected Shri Goenkaji and Mataji Sitting in Dhamma Hall

In those days there was a deep urge to work for eliminating innumerable degraded customs prevalent in society. What bothered me the most was to consider someone high or low merely due to the accident of his or her birth. Propelled by sheer enthusiasm, I took a few so called low-born people to Arya Samaj, where I had a thread ceremony performed for them and declared them as high-born. But there was more enthusiasm than wisdom and experience in this attempt and it resulted in total failure. The tradition bound, ancient social customs were deeply entrenched and did not permit such transgressions, and those unfortunate ones returned to their previous level in the social hierarchy. Undeterred, I tried again, but found these taboos very difficult to break.

In my early youth, I also raised my voice against forced marriage of very young girls with older men. Another instance of my effort at social upliftment ended in an embarrassing failure as well when a friend's wife had passed away and coincidentally, around the same time, a young girl became a widow immediately after her marriage. A few of us got together and convinced our widower friend to marry that young widow. Thus prodded by us he finally agreed, but the community was up in arms. There was a huge uproar, our friend's father even threatened to jump in the Irrawaddy river. This was the end of another effort to break rotting social shackles. These varied efforts in this direction had angered the community elders and I was now considered a rebel in our society.

Yet the influence of Arya Samaj grew stronger, furthering my reformist efforts. My elder brothers, Balkrishna and Babulal were both married around the age of 15, though according to the Sharda Act (a law enacted in 1929 to prevent child marriage) marriage before 18 years of age was not permitted. Now it was my turn and I firmly opposed getting married until I turned 18. No one, of course, was ready to listen to me, but a happy coincidence saved me.

A famous astrologer, visiting from India came to stay at the Arya Bhavan in our neighbourhood. When he read my palm, he predicted that though I was to have a long life, there was a danger to my life when I turned 18. I was happy to hear this and took him to meet my family. He predicted their futures too and repeated the prediction he had made for me – that I had a risk of not surviving my 18th year. With this argument, I convinced my mother that consigning an innocent girl in her teens to widowhood if I was not to survive beyond the age of 18 was unthinkable. My kind mother was convinced and she declared that I was not to be married until that blighted year had passed.

From the mists of memory arises another incident of my rebelliousness. As I mentioned, both my brothers were married at the age of 15. When I turned 15, I was pressurized to accept our family priest as my religious teacher who would then conduct my sacred thread ceremony, a necessary step prior to my impending marriage. However, this priest was found to be of questionable morals, and I strongly opposed him saying I cannot accept someone with moral turpitude as my religious teacher. I was then asked to accept the priest who performed daily pujas at our house in our family temple, but even here the whispers of questionable moral behaviour were getting louder, and I stubbornly refused to accept anyone with uncertain morals as my guru.

But to offset the rising pressures from the family, I suggested that the morally upright priest, pandit Mangaldevji Shastri of Arya Samaj be permitted to perform the ceremony, as I could accept him as my preceptor. But the differences between the Hindus belonging to Sanatana dharma (ancient tradition) and the Arya Samajis (reformist Hindu movement) were deep and the family simply refused to entertain the idea. The debate around my thread ritual died down and I remained without the sacred thread. Just as well.

I had no idea then that the flame of rebelliousness that was kindled in my heart was soon to turn into a roaring fire. I had taken to the reformist philosophy of the Arya Samaj, but my mind, immersed as it was in the worship of manifest gods with attributes, could not accept their idea of the unmanifest, formless gods. I simply could not grasp how such an abstract god would be worshipped, and there was no stopping my bhakti for my beloved one, Krishna. My morning ritual of singing bhajans and reading from the sacred Gita text continued. While reading in the Gita about the ferocious battle of Mahabharat between brothers, resulting in the deaths of many warriors and causing untold destruction, I could not see anything holy in it, but my worshipped One's words of equanimity in the face of adversity, indeed in all situations had appealed to me immensely and I wanted to make this a living reality in my life.

I also read that the four-tiered social system, based on a person's work, aptitude, tendencies and behaviour was created by Krishna himself:

**Chātur-varṇyaṁ mayā sṛṣṭaṁ guṇa-karma-vibhāgaśah
tasya kartāram api māṁ viddhyakartāram avyayam.**

(Gita 4/13)

The four categories of occupations were created by me according to people's qualities and activities. Although I am the creator of this system, know me to be the non-doer and eternal.

I reflected about this social system based on the inclination, actions and nature of an individual and how it degenerated into a hard bound caste system based on birth. A sound social system had been corrupted into its present state based on texts like 'Manusmriti' written by some to suit their utter selfish needs, and to safeguard their future generations.

The severe oppression that was foisted on the lower castes and the untouchables by the upper castes was a painful reality even when I was in Burma, but seeing their pitiable conditions first hand while visiting India, my rebellious mind mused: "How could a wholesome system created by my god be so polluted due to the arrogance of the so called superior ones?" And once

polluted: "Why did he, the omniscient, omnipresent and ever compassionate one not restore the right order? Why were those who had disturbed this ancient system not punished severely for spoiling it?"

Since my early days I was disturbed by this social phenomenon. There was a boy in my class, Gurucharan Singh, the son of a sweeper. He would sit on the same bench with me, which was totally unacceptable to my other classmates. During lunch break we would continue to sit together on the same bench and eat food brought from home. I never ate from his tiffin box, yet my classmates were not happy. They would rebuke me and gossip about it.

As for me, I simply failed to understand how a person could become an untouchable just because he was born in a certain family, however virtuous and talented he may be; alternately how could a person be considered high born simply by virtue of being born in a high caste, no matter how virtuous he may be. Even as I grew older, this bitter reality continued to haunt me giving me endless pain, though I could do nothing about it.

Whenever I travelled with my elders by train, we would ask a Burmese fellow traveler, sitting on the same bench to move away during meal times as we opened our food boxes brought from home, or else we would not eat. Whether sitting with a low caste boy and eating together in school, or travelling with my elders by train and requesting a Burmese gentleman, considered to be low born simply because he was Burmese, to get up and move away during meal times was painful.

I had seen this in its extreme form even in Churu while living in Rajasthan, India. Though I prayed to my beloved Lord Krishna with utter devotion, at times I would rebel against him too, wondering how he who created this beautiful world could not take stern steps to stop this degeneration? "How can we, who are born in the merchant or Brahmin class consider ourselves superior and oppress those who are born in the lower stratas?" I still remember a couplet written in those days:

Are we the exalted ones, merely because we are born in the Brahmin or the merchant class? We are the high born, we are the best, our place in society is certainly high.

I was confused. A deep sense of rebelliousness and profound devotion for the lord existed simultaneously.

Surrender with Bhakti - Profound Devotion

My upbringing as mentioned earlier, was nurtured by parents who were deeply dedicated to the path of devotion as expounded by the 'Gita Press' of Gorakhpur in India. Very early in life I came in contact with teachers like Mohan Masterji (Madan Mohan Sharma), a sensitive devotee, who promoted the sacred literature published by 'Gita Press' selflessly in Myanmar. He would sing devotional songs with tears flowing from his eyes. Watching him and being sensitive I too would get teary eyed while singing and praying to the manifest gods. I still remember as a seven year old boy, when I read books to my mother published by the 'Gita Press' like, 'A Child Devotee' or 'Women Devotees' the tears would flow, and my mother, with moist eyes would pull me in her lap and hug me tight. I would say: "Ma, I too will become Dhruv." (legendary child character of the scriptures), and she would reply: "Yes, my son, you will become Dhruv." I lived in this devotional miasma for many years.

Both Shiva and Krishna were objects of my devotion as my father was a Shiva devotee while my mother was a Krishna devotee. My beloved grandfather on the other hand had a deep inclination towards the Buddha. Whether he went to the Satyanarayan temple of Mandalay or not, he rarely missed his visits to the ancient and historic Mahamuni Buddha Temple situated in Sanju, a suburb of Mandalay at least once a week. I would accompany him, as I was very drawn towards the meditative statue of the Buddha in that splendid temple and used to stare at it with unblinking eyes.

Its large courtyard though filled with devotees, always

remained clean and resonated with deep silence. This appealed to me tremendously. In that silent space, Baba would sit for a long time with closed eyes. I often wonder what kind of meditation he was doing, or whether he just sat there, enjoying the bliss of silence and solitude. Watching him, I too would fold my legs and sit next to him. Along with Shiva and Krishna, the Buddha too became my worshipped lord now. Though the two large pictures that hung in our house were that of Lord Shiva and Lord Krishna, my devotion for the Buddha was nurtured by these regular visits to the Mahamuni temple.

Mahadevji Nathani

One of my brothers-in-law, my eldest sister’s husband, Mahadevji Nathani, worked as an accountant in our office. Almost 20 years older than me, he led a disciplined, Dhamma-filled life. People respected this learned man for his scholarly attributes as he was well versed in Sanskrit literature. Sometimes I would see a Sanskrit pandit having a lengthy discussion on the finer points of a scripture with him.

As a child, I was learning scriptural chants like Vishnusahasranam, Gopalsahasranam, Shiva Mahimnastotra, Shiva Tandavstotra, Srimadbhagavat and so on. He would help me with the correct pronunciation. I loved to hear his powerful voice resonating with Sanskrit chants, especially when he chanted Rudri, (a Shiva chant). The whole atmosphere would be filled as if echoing with potent drum beats.

Seeing me visit the Mahamuni temple with Baba, he would often explain that the Buddha was the 9th incarnation of Lord Vishnu and certainly worthy of respect and that there was nothing wrong in visiting his temple to pay homage, but to remember, never to get drawn in by his teachings as these were not worthy of being followed. He went on to say that Lord Vishnu incarnated as the Buddha for the singular purpose of confusing those evil, unwholesome ones, who upon receiving his misleading teachings would then be consigned to hell, so that they could never go to heaven after death. To substantiate his views, he would read passages from scripture, which I now think was perhaps the Vishnu Purana. This conversation was meaningless to me as I was too young to understand why some god would incarnate just to mislead people on the wrong path. But since I respected him, his words nestled deep in my heart -- that the Buddha is indeed respect worthy, but his teachings are not to be accepted.

(-- from the Autobiography of SNG ...)

Continued ...

Children’s Meditation Courses in Mumbai

Date	Course site	Age 10-16, Registration 2 days before Course, Thursday & Friday.
First Sunday	Ulhasnagar, Wadala, Khar	
Second Sunday	Dombivili, Andheri	
Third Sunday	Ghatkopar, Goregaon	
Fourth Sunday	Airoli, Kalyan	

“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: Goregaon: Vipassana Counselling and Research Centre, Siddharth Municipal General Hospital, Goregaon (W), Mob. 98924-15803, Tel: 2624-2025. Ulhasnagar: A Block 703/1405, Gokul Nagar, Behind Netaji School, Near Mahesh Granite, Tel. 9970755130, Wadala: “BMC School – Sewri Wadala Estate Road No: 7A Behind Lijjat Papad Building Contact: Mobile: 98922-18186, 98201-50336, Khar: Mahabodhi Buddha Vihar, Baudha Smashan Bhumi, Carter Rd. Danda, Khar West, Mumbai-52, Mob. 9930962652, 9869281410, Dombivili: Tilak School, Tilak Nagar, Dombivili, Mob. 9029423540. Andheri: Mayfair Meridian Meditation Hall, Ceaser Road, Off S.V. Road, Amboli, Near St. Blaise Mob. 9967480865, 9967813478. Ghatkopar: SNDT School, New Building, Cama Lane, Ghatkopar (W), Opp Vidyut Society, Mumbai 400086. Tel: 25011096, 25162505.

Airoli: Dnyandeep School, sector 2, Airoli, Mobile: 9969267720, 9969950901. Kalyan: Krishanrao Dhulup KDM school No. 4, Ram baug lane no 5, Near old Vani Vidyalay. Mob. 9987425633. --Please call two days in advance for registration. NB: *Please bring a cushion. *Please register on the specified phone numbers. If unable to attend after registration, please *Inform in advance. *Please arrive on time for the course.

Kerala Flood Damage

The Kerala Vipassana meditation centre, Dhamma Ketana in Chengannur has been completely devastated. We have recently constructed the kitchen /dining hall and female quarters which have also been flooded with rain water, along with the rest of the centre. Even all the electrical equipment, computers etc have been ruined. The centre can not be of use for conducting courses till we repair and renovate. It will take 15/20 days provided we have the necessary funds . We humbly request our Vipassana brothers and sisters to help us to restore the facilities and restart the 10 day course as soon as possible at the Dhamma Ketana Centre. You may contact the centre teacher: Raghunath Kurupji Mobile No. 9495118871, if you need any other information. Our centre bank details are as follows :- **KERALA VIPASSANA SAMITI, CENTRAL BANK OF INDIA, KOLLAKADAVU A/C NO. 3553134716. IFSC CODE : CBIN0280953 We have no 80G facility in above trust so far. If any one wants 80G then they can send the donation to the Chennai Vipassana Centre in the said account which will be later transferred to Kerala Centre’s account for renovation work. This account has 80G exemption under IT Act. You must state that the donation is meant for donor Kerala Centre. VIPASSANA MEDITATION CENTRE, STATE BANK OF INDIA, A/C. NO. 34241713833. IFSC CODE SBIN0012931.**

Additional Responsibilities

1. Mr. Satyapal. Sharma, (SAT), to serve as acting CentreTeacher at Dhamma Marudhara, Jodhpur.
2. Mr.. Uttamrao Patil, Dhule, To serve as Center Teacher of Dhamma Sarowar, Dhule.
3. Mrs. Neera Kapoor (AT), To assist the Centre Teacher of Dhamma Sota
4. Mrs. Pragati Thubrikar, (SAT) To Assist the Center Teacher of Dhamma Naga.

Newly Appointed Senior Assistant Teachers

1. Shri Basantlal Patel, to assist the CentreTeacher of Dhammabal.
2. Shri Vikram Aditya, New Delhi, to assist the Centre Teacher of Dhamma Sota.
3. Mr R.R. Ramakrishnan to assist the CentreTeacher at Dhamma Kanchi.
4. Mr. Waman Baingane, Nagpur
5. Mr. Hiranman Rajput. Dhule
6. Mr. Bharat Prasad Mishra, Muzaffarpur, Bihar
4. Ms. Kajal Mehta, Madurai
5. Mr. K. Balachander, Pondicherry
6. Mr. MRS Vijaysundar, Pondicherry
7. Mrs. S. Karpagavalli, Chennai
8. Ms. Hema NB, Bangalore
9. Mr. Sunil Deshmukh, Wardha
10. Mr. Manoj Sonawane, Wardha
11. Mr. Rajhans Wanjari, Nagpur
12. Mr. Ramdasji Bhaskar, Nagpur
13. Mr. Vinod Wakde, Gondia
14. Mr. Umesh Kamble, Gondia
15. Ms. Sushma Meshram, Gondia
16. Mrs. Namita Walde, Gondia
17. Mrs. Sujata Gajbhiye, Kolhapur
18. Shri Suhas Bhosle, Kolhapur
19. Mrs. Poonam Rajul, Kolhapur
20. Mrs. Meghana Ayare, Chiplun
21. Mrs. Sushma Hardas, Karad
22. Mrs. Shilpa Dhongadi, Karad
23. Mrs. Sanjivani Pawar, Karad
24. Ms. Monali Shinde, Karad
25. Mrs. Suvarna Bhosale, Karad
26. Mr. Dipak Patil, Karad
27. Mr. Dinesh Kshtriyia, Karad
28. Mr. Chandrakant, Karad
29. Mr. Arun Koli, Karad
30. Mrs. Akanksha, Jadhav. Ratnagiri
31. Ms. Neha Lone, Pune
32. Ms. Deval Kotak, Ahmedabad
33. Mrs. Lilavatiben Vaghela, Ahmedabad
34. Mr. Sandip Patel, Ahmedabad
35. Ms. Asha, Makwana, Ahmedabad
36. Mrs. Pravina Prajapati, Ahmedabad
37. Mr. Kaushik Patel, Mehsana
38. Ms. Shweta Rajani, Jaipur
39. Mr. Rajkumar Gautam, Jaipur
40. Ms. Pao Yeh Li, Taiwan
41. Mrs. Nuntiya Jaravechason, Thailand
42. Mr. Andrew Wong Ye Him, Hong Kong
43. Mr. Tsang Tsz Cheong (William), Hong Kong
44. Ms. Katy Hanser, Switzerland
45. Ms. Inga Kuehn, Germany

Newly Appointed Assistant Teachers

1. Mr. Vivek Pal, New Delhi
2. Mrs. Vina Bhiwapurkar, Nagpur
3. Smt. Vandana Verma, Delhi
4. Shri Rohitashwa Rahul Nagpal, Shahjahanpur, U.P.
5. Shri Rajender Kumar Mehta, Gurgaon, Haryana
6. Smt. Anjali Sarna, Delhi
- 7-8. Mr. Satyajit Thakur and Mrs Janki Thakur, Lucknow, U.P.
9. Ms. Rema Sukumaran, HONG KONG
- Mr. Sachin Natu, (SAT)- ICCCC MemberIncharge of India, Sri Lanka, UAE and Africa
1. Ms. Asha Laungani, AT- RCCC of North Rajasthan.
2. Mrs Dechen Wangmo, CCT- RCCC Leh Ladakh.

Children course teachers

- 1-2. Mr. Deven Shah & Mrs. Shaalini Srinivasan, Auroville TN
3. Mrs. Sonal Mehta, Madurai

New responsibility – RCCC

Vip. introduction & Anapana session in Palitana

Near the centre of Dhamma Pali (Gujarat), a camp was organised by the local organisers in Palitana on 6, 7 & 8th August 2018 where about 1000 to 12000 participants joined every day to learn about Vipassana and practise Anapana. Everyone found it to be very beneficial. Many expressed the view that such seminars should be held at more places. Many of them also wished to join a course and a few persons have already applied at the Dhamma Pali centre. The local head Jain Muni Maharaj was very much impressed and wished to sit a course and he encouraged all his devotees to attend a 10-day course.

50 years of the Return of Dhamma

A team under the guidance of Mr. Surana is collecting all kinds of anecdotes, memories and reminiscences of sadhakas with Guruji and Mataji. Those who have been associated with Vipassana for a long time are asked to contribute. Whatever dialogues or discussions you had with Guruji and Mataji or whatever audios, videos, or photos you have will be valuable for the archive. Please send them. They will be used here as and when the proper occasion arises. **Contact:** Rampratap Yadav V.R.I. Dhammagiri, Igatpuri, 422403, Dist Nashik, E-mail 50yearsofdhamma@vridhamma.org. WhatsApp no. 7977380198.

Dhamma Yatra for Meditators

On the occasion of the Golden Jubilee of the return of Dhamma to India, Dhamma Yatras for around 1000 meditators are being arranged. The first group of 150 travellers will travel from the 31st Jan 2019 evening until 13th Feb 2019.

They will depart 31st Jan. from Mumbai to Varanasi by train in sleeper class. 1st Feb. travel from Sarnath by AC buses to Sravasti, Kapilavatu, Lumbini, Kushinagar, Vaishali, Nalanda, Rajgir etc. and end at Bodhgaya on 11th, then return by train from Gaya to Mumbai arriving on 13th. The cost of the Yatra will be around Rs 45 to 50 thousand which will cover the cost of travel, accommodation and food. Arrangement of stay and food will be made at local viharas and hotels. Those interested to join the Yatra may please register their names on Mob. +91-7506943663

Special Programs at Global Vipassana Pagoda

A special programme at Global Vipassana Pagoda will be held from 29th to 30th Jan 2019, the details of which will be published in the next issue.

One-day course at Panchayati Wadi, Mumbai

One day course will be held on 31st January in the famous Panchayati Wadi Dharmasala at Panjrapol, South Mumbai, the details of which will be given in the next issue.

NOTE: Due to technical difficulties the September and October issues were not published. Therefore, this issue covers the months Sept. Oct. & Nov. Sincere apologies for any inconvenience caused.

Thanks and Metta. (Editor)

One-day Mega course and Mahasaghadan at Global Vipassana Pagoda for 2019

On the occasion of the death anniversary of Mataji (5th Jan.) and Sayagi U Ba Khin (19th Jan.) Saṅghadāna is being organized on 13th January 2019 from 9:30 a.m. After that meditators can meditate from 11 a.m. onwards. Those who wish to take part in the meritorious Saṅghadāna, they should Contact: 1. Mr Derik Pegado, 9921227057. or 2. Sri Bipin Mehta, Mo. 9920052156, Tel: 022- 62427512 (9:30AM to 5:30PM), Email: audits@globalpagoda.org

One-day mega course at GVP from 11 a.m. onwards till 4 p.m. Non-meditators may participate in the 3 pm discourse. Please come only with prior registration. **Samaggānaṃ 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: www.onday.globalpagoda.org

DHAMMA DOHA

*Jāti varṇa kā, varga kā, jahān bheda nā hoyā;
Jo sabakā, sabake liye, śuddha dharama hai soya.*

Pure Dhamma is that which makes no distinction between caste, class and colour And which is for all and for the good of all.

*Sampradāya yā jāti kā, jahān bheda nā hoyā;
Śuddha sanātana dharma hai, vandaniya hai soya.*

That Dhamma is pure, eternal and worthy of respect which makes no distinction between caste and sect.

*Ūnca nīca nahi dharma hai, jāta- pānta nahi dharma;
Sāmyabhāva hī dharma hai, aikyabhāva hī dharma.*

Pure Dhamma does not make distinction between the high and the low nor between caste and rank. Pure Dhamma consists in the unity and equality of all.

*Jāti-varṇa ke nāma para, phailā atyācāra;
Sadācāra garhita huā, pūjita mithyācāra.*

There is tyranny in the name of caste and colour. As a result, good conduct is censured and bad conduct is praised.

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