

# Vipassana Newsletter

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

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## WORDS OF DHAMMA

Catunnaṃ, bhikkhave, ariyasaccānaṃ ananubodhā  
appaṭivedhā evamidaṃ dīghamaddhānaṃ  
sandhāvitaṃ saṃsaritaṃ mamañceva tumhākañca.

DN. mahāvaggaṇāḷi, mahāparinibbānasuttaṃ-155

“Because of a lack of understanding and a lack of penetration, monks, of Four Noble Truths, both you and I have been wandering and running along in Saṃsāra for a long time.

## 50th anniversary of the Return and Spread of Dhamma: A great occasion to express gratitude to our teacher Mr. 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 practising Dhamma even more seriously. This will be a true expression of gratitude to respected Mr. S. N. Goenkaji.

The vignettes from the life of the world renowned Vipassana teacher Mr. Satyanarayan Goenka, from the days prior to his coming into pure dhamma, are given here with intent that it may inspire others when they see how a person steeped in devotional fervor from a very young age could change so much. We offer this series from his autobiography--**NL Part -4**

## Contact with Arya Samaj

*Continued ...*

Around the time I turned 14, I came in contact with the Arya Samaj (Hindu reform movement). They had built a new temple close to our house in Mandalay and their priest, pandit Mangaldevji Shastri, had just arrived from India. With hair having turned fully white, and being toothless though he was not over 60 years of age, he looked much older, yet his well built body and shining face attracted me immensely. With his compassionate persona, deep knowledge of Vedic literature and an ability to explain it in simple language, he was able to kindle my interest in Arya Samaj. This interest stayed with me until I left Myanmar for India at the age of 18, at the start of the Japanese war.

He sparked a new awareness among the local youth, organising them in a group called ‘Arya Bal Sena’, and I was made its head. We would gather every Sunday for discussions and to learn yogic asanas, pranayama and the art of defence, wielding sticks (gataka) under his guidance. I loved it. He also explained the principles of Arya Samaj most lovingly. I was impressed by the intelligent, well developed thoughts of their preceptor, Maharshi Dayanand Saraswati, though I never could become a worshipper of the un-manifest or abstract god as professed by them. My dedication for the manifest god with form was deeply entrenched in me, and it was impossible for me to turn away from it. Whenever I heard



1. Goenkaji's sister, 2. Resp. Mr. Goenkaji, 3. Goenkaji's Adopted mother, 4. Resp. Mataji and All six sons standing behind

their arti chant (fire ritual) ‘Jai Jagdish Hare’ being sung with the verse ‘Raise your compassionate hands, I take refuge in you, oh lord’, then I would think, “Why, this is an invocation from a manifest god with form; there is an appeal, pleading with him to raise his hands, and there are qualities and attributes too; how else will compassion arise for those seeking refuge”.

But I did not dare to pose these questions to my teacher, pandit Shastriji. I concluded that devotion could only be towards the gods with form; while contemplation could be carried out towards an un-manifest god.

I loved the fragrant aromas that wafted through the prayer hall during the weekly havan (food offering ritual), though I was not drawn towards it as I could not understand their Vedic chants. But I well understood their concluding peace chant which was very appealing. Sometimes I would repeat this chant at home, feeling mighty pleased with myself.

One major achievement of this association was that I learned not to accept anything without first examining it. I also understood that so much religious literature, written with the mindless rationale of ‘our scriptures say so’, should not be accepted blindly. It came as a revelation to me that many religious texts had been written with crafty selfishness to gain widespread acceptance. Another revelation for me was that from time to time there had been interpolations in our scriptures which were not pertaining to the truth and hence were misleading and not acceptable.

Another aspect that deeply influenced me was their approach towards social reform. From the age of 14 to 18, I made unsuccessful attempts along with other youngsters to stop

child marriages and unmatched marriages between old men and teen brides. Also, there was an unsuccessful attempt to get a widow remarried. Further, there was an attempt to 'purify' an untouchable and embolden him to take the sacred thread, which also bore no fruit. But the reformist attitude that had been awakened in me gave results in time to come.

I read Maharshi Dayanandji's original writing 'Satyarth Prakash' (Light of Truth) which opened up new dimensions for me. I cannot say that at that tender age I understood the book well, but from it I read that there were many shortcomings in the teachings of the Buddha. One was that the Buddha turned people atheist by rejecting the existence of a soul and a Supreme Being. Secondly, he criticized the Vedas. I concluded at this time that this may be the reason why those who walk on his path go to the lower fields of existence. In this book many other weaknesses in his teachings were highlighted which were beyond my youthful grasp. But I understood enough to view the Buddha's teachings as faulty. I remembered my brother-in-law giving similar explanations regarding his teachings and this made my mind even more resistant against them.

When I reached India from Burma at the beginning of the war in 1942, I came to hear of further shortcomings in the teachings. For instance, he was a proponent of the misery of human existence which generated a feeling of hopelessness amongst the people. The focus in his teachings was on the flimsy, momentariness of existence; amidst such uncertainty, there was no mention of the 'ever-present', 'absolute', and 'eternal', and hence, no guidance was offered to come out of this ever rotating wheel of existence. His entire teaching was negative, without giving any relief or direction towards a positive goal which would serve as a beacon to a seeker, giving him hope for a glowing future. He was a recluse and his teachings, I concluded, may perhaps be beneficial to renunciates, but were of no use to a householder.

No doubt the Buddha was an ocean of compassion and as such encouraged total non-violence. This, however, resulted in the weakening of the nation. Consider the instance of a brave warrior like Ashok who, having got carried away by the teachings, broke his sword and turned his back on battle. This act resulted in seriously negative and far reaching consequences. The country was attacked by outsiders repeatedly, every time resulting in a fresh round of enslavement.

The Buddha's words with his emphasis on the futility of existence, took the beautiful rainbow colours out of people's lives making them appear dull and pointless. Everything appeared to be empty, hopeless, with nothing to look forward to. This was extremely harmful for the nation. I heard many such stories with growing revulsion which left a deep impact.

I thought that there must have been many good factors in the Buddha's teachings, due to which his Dhamma had spread far and wide throughout the world garnering much respect. But with an unbreakable faith in my inherited Vedic tradition, I concluded that everything that was good in his teachings was taken from these Vedic traditions. And besides excessive emphasis on renunciation and non-violence, and reforming a few shortcomings that had sprouted in current times in our society, there was nothing new in his teachings.

Tremendous success came to me at a young age in a number of fields like religion, culture, education, and politics. I was in Rangoon, and as a 25 year old was having contact with many leading personalities, and many of these associations turned into close friendships. However, not yet being fully matured, I would sometimes take the liberty to openly express my opinions. Though spoken gently, these opinions would sometimes rub my associates the wrong way. I would then try to assuage their feelings, while thinking how unfortunate it was that they were not able to understand the profundity of the Vedic tradition, because of which their feelings were hurt. It was my belief that

the Vedas carried the wisdom and knowledge of the world; wherever, whenever anyone spoke words of wisdom, their source was to be found in the Vedas. Of course, I had not read a single page of the Vedas up until then. Everything I believed was based on hearsay.

An announcement was made in a local English newspaper that I would be speaking on the subject of 'Quintessence of Hinduism'. My speeches at that time had always been given in Hindi on topics of literature, culture or religion. As my knowledge of English was limited many of my Burmese friends could not benefit from my talks. However, when mistakenly an announcement of this talk appeared in the English newspaper, it was presumed I would be speaking in English and three or four of my close Burmese friends turned up to listen to me. I spoke in Hindi much to their disappointment, so after the talk I took them home to give them a gist of my speech.

I explained that the Gita was the quintessential book of the Hindus and that the essence of the Gita was equanimity, balance of the mind; I gave them a short exposition on it. My friend U Ta Mya replied that what I was describing was in fact the virtues of an Arahant as expounded by the Buddha. I spoke up arrogantly, of course, telling them that the Buddha's words were taken from our Vedas or Gita, so little wonder that what he spoke of as being the attributes of an Arahant, were in consonance with the qualities of one with equanimity as mentioned in the Gita.

U Ta Mya did not like this. He was a scholar of good standing and knew Pali, Sanskrit, Burmese, Hindi and English well. He had studied for many years in an Indian university of good repute and was the chief of Cultural Affairs in the Burmese government. He simply said that my statement was not correct and that I would understand how faulty my opinions were when I read the Buddha's words and our traditional Hindu scriptures with total objectivity. We were close friends and such differences of view did not affect our friendship. However, I remained firm in my opinion.

Respected bhadant Anand Kausalyanandji visited Burma often and stayed in our house. We had received much assistance from him in our work promoting the Hindi language and I was grateful for it. As a conscientious householder, I was quite aware of my duties towards a guest. However, any comments from him on the Buddha's teachings would make me uncomfortable, and he, being careful to not bring in any unpleasantness, would change the topic with mild humour.

Once there was some conversation on the topic of Hindi promotional work at my home. My Burmese friend U Ta Mya, with whom there had been some mild unpleasantness due to my comments regarding an Arahant's qualities being taken from the Gita, was also present. Suddenly he raised this topic and Anandji commented that he was right, and what's more, the Gita was written well after the Buddha's time and was filled with his words and teachings. Needless to say, Anandji was very much influenced by the Buddha's teachings.

I cannot describe the impact that these words had on me, more so when he went on to say that it was a totally false belief that the Buddha's religion was the offspring of the Vedic religion. In fact, today's Hindu religion was the offspring of the Buddhist religion, according to him. U Ta Mya was shaking his head in agreement. I remained silent, but they understood that this statement had made me deeply unhappy. How far were their words from the truth, I thought, due to my conventional understanding of Buddhism at the time!

How could the Gita, which had been given as words of encouragement by Krishna to Arjuna on the battlefield of Kurukshetra about 5000 years ago, have been influenced by the Buddha's words which were spoken around 2500 years ago? This simple logic seemed to be beyond them, influenced as they were by the Buddhist religion. There was no truth in their words

as the reality remained that the Buddha was influenced by the words of the ancient Gita. The bigger falsehood for me was that today's Hinduism was the child of Buddhism. But I felt it wise to remain silent.

My association with respected Anandji had always been congenial with little or no discussion on the subject of Buddhist religion with him. However, once at the end of his stay when I took him to the airport, his flight was delayed by two hours. While we waited he talked about the last moments of the Buddha's life, mentioning how a seeker had come at that time wanting to learn Dhamma from him. The Buddha's assistant bhikkhu Ananda stopped him, explaining that as this was the time of parinibbana he should be allowed to rest. But there was no stopping this insistent seeker. The Buddha's time was drawing to a close, but the dying light burnt brightly once again with waves of compassion arising in the Buddha, as he said, "Ananda, let him come; he is a deserving seeker and will benefit from my words". And in his last moments he taught Dhamma, explaining the path to liberation once again. Such was the Buddha.

I was always sensitive, even sentimental perhaps, and I certainly had deep respect for the Buddha. As I listened to Anandji speak, tears flowed from my eyes; I had no doubt whatsoever about The Buddha's boundless compassion.

Seeing how my heart melted, he gave me a copy of the Dhammapada. It lay on my table for many years. I did not read a single page due to my firm belief there was something seriously wrong in the Buddha's teachings which could lead me down a wrong path. Why else did Adi Shankaracharya, the giant among the learned spiritual heads, oust him from India? Nothing could shake the belief in me that the Buddha was very worthy of respect, but his teachings were not to be accepted. One's childhood beliefs and prejudices are so hard to let go of.

(.. from the Autobiography of Mr. SN Goenka ) -- Continued ..

## 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 of Meditators

On the occasion of the Golden Jubilee of the return of Dhamma, Dhamma Yatras for around 1000 meditators are being arranged. The first group of 150 travellers will start on the night of 31st Jan 2019 till 13th Feb 2019.

They will start 31st Jan. from Mumbai to Varanasi by train in sleeper class. 1st Feb. from Sarnath by AC buses to Sravasti, Kapilavatu, Lumbini, Kushinagar, Vaishali, Nalanda, Rajgir etc. and end at Bodhgaya on 11th, then by train from Gaya to Mumbai arrive on 13th. The cost of the Yatra will be around Rs 45 to 50 thousand which will cover the cost of travel 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.

## Workshop for Anapana Sati courses for the Differently Abled Children.

A special workshop was held at Dhammapunna, Pune, India from 13th to 15th July 2018. Discussions were held about how to impart Anapana Sati meditation to differently-abled children. Disabilities like hearing and speech impairment(HSI), visual challenges, physical and mental handicaps were covered. Work done over the last 12 years was shared. Some audio-visual material has been prepared. One ICC member, one AT, 13 CCTs and 22 Dhammaservers participated in the workshop. The results have been encouraging. In the following two months Childrens' Anapana Sati Courses were successfully conducted in Dehradun, Kolhapur, Pune and Jalgaon all in India.

### 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, Dombivli, Mob. 9029423540. Andheri: Mayfair Meridian Meditation Hall, Ceaser Road, Off S.V. Road, Amboli, Near St. Blaise Mob. 9967480865, 9967813478. Ghatkopar: SNTD 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 Dhulap 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.

### Additional Responsibilities

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. Mr. Uttamrao Patil, Dhule, To serve as Center Teacher of Dhamma Sarowar, Dhule. | 3. Mr. Sandip Patel, Ahmedabad                |
| 2. Mrs. Neera Kapoor (AT), To assist the Centre Teacher of Dhamma Sota             | 4. Ms. Asha, Makwana, Ahmedabad               |
| 3. Mrs. Pragati Thubrikar, (SAT) to Assist the Center Teacher of Dhamma Naga.      | 5. Mrs. Pravina Prajapati, Ahmedabad          |
|  | 6. Mr. Kaushik Patel, Mehsana                 |
|  | 7. Ms. Shweta Rajani, Jaipur                  |
|  | 8. Mr. Rajkumar Gautam, Jaipur                |
|  | 9. Ms. Pao Yeh Li, Taiwan                     |
|  | 10. Mrs. Nuntiya Jaravechason, Thailand       |
|  | 11. Mr. Andrew Wong Ye Him, Hong Kong         |
|  | 12. Mr. Tsang Tsz Cheong (William), Hong Kong |
|  | 13. Ms. Katy Hanser, Switzerland              |
|  | 14. Ms. Inga Kuehn, Germany                   |

### Newly Appointed Senior Assistant Teachers

1. Mr. Waman Baingane, Nagpur
2. Mr. Hiranjan Rajput, Dhule
3. Mr. Bharat Prasad Mishra, Muzaffarpur, Bihar

### Newly Appointed Assistant Teachers

1. Mr. Vivek Pal, New Delhi
2. Mrs. Vina Bhiwapurkar, Nagpur
3. Ms. Rema Sukumaran, HONG KONG

### Children course teachers

1. Ms. Deval Kotak, Ahmedabad
2. Mrs. Lilavatiben Vaghela,

### New responsibility – RCCC

1. Mr. Sachin Natu, (SAT)- ICCCC Member Incharge of India, Sri Lanka, UAE and Africa
2. Ms. Asha Laungani, AT- RCCC of North Rajasthan.
3. Mrs Dechen Wangmo, CCT- RCCC Leh Ladakh.

## Centuries Corpus Fund for the Operation of Global Vipassana Pagoda

Guruji desired that a corpus fund should be set up for the GLOBAL VIPASSANA PAGODA so that it may continue its noble objective of serving countless beings for 2500 years.

A Centuries Corpus Fund of Rs. 125 crores is being set up by the “Global Vipassana Foundation” to meet the cost of Creation, Building, Operation and Maintenance for the Global Vipassana Pagoda. If 8760 people were to donate a sum of Rs. 1,42,694/- (one lac forty-two thousand six hundred and ninety-four rupees) a corpus of 125 crores will result. And each of the 8760 donors will earn merits of having donated for one hour of C.B.O.M for the Global Vipassana Pagoda for its entire lifetime of 2500 years. The interest earned from the donation will meet the cost of Creation, Building Operation, and Maintenance expenses now and in the future. Saints have said that for as long as Lord Buddha’s corporeal relics remain, his teaching will also be maintained. This magnificent durable stone Pagoda will keep the Buddha-Relics safe for thousands of years and help ensure that the practice of Vipassana Meditation is kept alive. May everyone (meditators and non-meditators) avail themselves of this meritorious opportunity that shall benefit countless beings for centuries together to come out of the circle of life and death and also help benefit the donors in fulfilling their Dana-Parami. For more information and to send funds, **Contact: Global Vipassana Foundation (GVF)**,

1. Mr. Derik Pegado, 9921227057. or 2. Mr. Bipin Mehta, Mo. 9920052156, A/c. Office: 022-62427512 / 62427510; Email-- audits@globalpagoda.org; Bank Details: ‘Global Vipassana Foundation’, Axis Bank Ltd., Sonimur Apartments, Timber Estate, Malad (W), Mumbai - 400064, Branch - Malad (W). Bank A/c No.- 911010032397802; IFSC No.- UTIB0000062; Swift code: AXISINBB062.

## The Construction of Dhammalaya 2

To give free accommodation to Dhamma Sevakas and meditators who come here 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: as above...(GVF)

## 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.

## One-day Mega course and Mahasāṅghadāna at Global Vipassana Pagoda for 2018-19

On the occasion of the death anniversary of Mataji (5th Jan.) and Sayagi U Ba Khin (19th Jan.) Saṅghadāna is being organized respectively on 30th September 2018 and 13th January 2019 from 9:30 a.m. After that meditators can meditate from 11 a.m. Those who wish to take part in the meritorious Saṅghadāna, they should Contact: 1. Mr Derik Pegado, 9921227057. or 2. Mr. 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.oneday.globalpagoda.org

## DHAMMA DOHA

*Samyaka darśana jñāna se, karen citta kā śodha;  
Dharmabodha taba taba jage, jaba jaba jāge krodha.*

Purify your mind by developing right knowledge and vision, whenever anger arises one should see sensations and remain equanimous.

*Para ko hī dekhata rahā, rahā ajña kā ajña;  
Jisane dekhā svayaṃ ko, vahī huā sarvajña.*

One who wants to know from others ever remains a fool, But one who sees and knows his ownself, he becomes omniscient.

*Jo nija kī anubhūti hai, samyaka darśana soya;  
Parānubhūti apane liye, mahaja kalpanā hoya.*

Right knowledge or vision is born out of one’s own experience, Others’ experiences are but imagination for oneself.

*Jaise sūrya prakāśa se, tārika dala chipa jāya;  
Jāge samyaka dr̥ṣṭi to, moha svayaṃ haṭa jāya.*

As a cluster of stars disappear when the sun rises. In the same way ignorance is automatically removed when right view is developed.

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Vipassana Research Institute

Dhamma Giri, Igatpuri 422 403  
Dist. Nashik, Maharashtra, India  
Tel: (02553) 244076, 244086,  
244144, 244440

Email: vri\_admin@dhamma.net.in

course booking: info@giri.dhamma.org

Website: www.vridhamma.org