

# 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 saṃsāritaṃ mamañceva tumbhākañca.**

*mahāvaggapāḷi, 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 Samsāra 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 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



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

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

Hindu 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 bhadrant 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 ..

## 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...!

## 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.

## Children's Meditation Courses in Mumbai

(Note: details in 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 Children's Anapana Sati Courses were successfully conducted in Dehradun, Kolhapur, Pune and Jalgaon all in India.....

## Pali – Hindi residential course

Pali – Hindi (six weeks residential course ) (23rd Feb to 11th April 2019).  
**Venue:** Pariyatti Bhavan, Global Pagoda campus, Gorai, Mumbai.  
Please find Eligibility Criteria for above courses on:  
<https://www.vridhamma.org/Pali-Study-Programs>  
**Contact:** VRI office-022- 28451204 Extn: 560, (9:30 AM to 5:30 PM only)  
Ms. Rajshree K: 9004698648, Mrs. Baljit Lamba: 9833518979, Mrs. Alka Vengurlekar: 9820583440, Mrs. Archana Deshpande: 9869007040

## Dhamma Yatra of Meditators

Dhamma Yatra for Vipassana meditators is being arranged in a group of 150 students. The first group will start their journey on the night of Jan 31, 2019.

Itinerary of the first group: 31st Jan., 2019: start from Mumbai to Varanasi by train in a sleeper class. 1st Feb. from Sarnath by AC bus to Kapilavatu, Lumbini, Sravasti, Kushinagar, Vaishali, Nalanda, Rajgir etc. 11th Feb: end of journey at Bodhgaya. 13th Feb: Arrival at Mumbai from Bodhgaya/Gaya. The cost of the Yatra will be around Rs. 45,000 to 50,000 which will cover the cost of **travel, accommodation at deferent places and food**. Arrangement of stay and food will be made at local viharas and hotels. Those who are interested to join the Yatra, please register their names on Mob. +91-7506943663.

## New Vip. Meditation Centre in Sri Ganganagar

A New Vipassana Meditation Centre is under construction at Sri Ganganagar, Rajasthan. Land aggregating 7.5 acres (3 hectares) has been purchased by a newly formed Vipassana Trust. Plans have been finalized to build a Centre for 120 meditators. Immediate plans include construction of a Dhamma Hall for 120 meditators. Fencing of the land, construction of a water tank, store house and the watchman's room have been completed.

Old students may participate to earn the merits of this project!

**Vipassana Trust Sri Ganganagar**, Address: Village- 7A Choti, Padampura Road, Sri Ganganagar, Rajasthan. **Bank details:** HDFC Bank, Bank A/c # 50200030108235, HDFC0000505.

**Contact:** Shri Ram Prakash Singhal- 91-9314510116; Shri Babulal Narang, 9414225425, 9413377064.

## First Course in Madagascar

The first 10 days course in Madagascar has taken place in September 6 to 17. It was a long time since local old students trying to organize a course in this very poor African island but the place was difficult to find. Finally it is in a centre place where street children are accommodated that it finally took place. 21 students attended the course and stayed until the end. Some of the employees of the centre participated as well as people from different parts of Madagascar. Everyone has benefited from Dhamma although the conditions of the course were not always convenient for the students (lot of mosquitos, fleas, and music from religious ceremonies around at this time of the year...). Nevertheless, everything went fine and next course can be organized in autumn next year when the children are on holidays and the religious ceremonies period almost over. We could also have two 10 days in a row to welcome more students. May all being be happy!

## Peaceful Demise

Mr. Sudarshan Grover (SAT) and assistant to Centre teacher of Dhamma Giri has passed away peacefully on 3rd November in Igatpuri. He served last course just two months before in Bihar. He has helped so many stabilising in Dhamma. May he gets the best fruits of Dhamma for his services. Much metta from Dhamma family.

## Newly Appointed Assistant Teachers

1. Shri Parshuram Venkatrao More, Nanded
2. Shri Milind Yeshwantrao Athawale, Nanded
3. Shri Amit Bhatia, Mumbai
4. Shri Bhaudas Meshram, Gondia
5. Mrs. Nalini Meshram, Gondia
6. Smt. Shobha Dhote, Amravati
7. Smt. Pramila Raut, Washim
8. Mrs. Kavita S. Ulemale, Washim
9. Mrs Sujata Khanna, Mumbai

10. Mr. Ri Kui Yang, China
11. Mrs. Min Rong, China

## Children course teachers

1. Shri Umesh Chand Pahwa, Nainital, Uttarakhand
2. Shri Rajeev Kaushik, Dehradun
3. Smt. Charu Goyal, Dehradun
4. Dr Manju Lata Sachan, Dehradun
5. Mr Sunil Sinha, Patna
6. Mr Basudev Sah, Muzaffarpur
7. Mr Uttam Choudhary, Muzaffarpur
8. Mrs Manu Bajpai, Bodh Gaya
9. Mrs Sangeeta Saraf, Vaishali
10. Ms Shih, Ling-Chi, Taiwan

## 1. Daily One-day course at Global Pagoda

Mandatory registration for a daily Vipassana course at Global Vipassana Pagoda Since last few months, daily one-day course for old students is taking place at the Global Vipassana Pagoda. For smooth administration and to serve the students in an efficient way, prior registration is essential. For easy registration, please write 'yes' with 'date' and 'name' on the mobile no. 8291894644 through WhatsApp or by sending SMS on 8291894645.

## 2. One-day mega course:

**Samaggānaṃ tapo sukho:** Avail the immense benefit of meditating in large group. **One day mega course** will be held at GVP from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. on January 13, 2019. Non-meditators may participate in the 3-4 pm discourse. Prior registration is mandatory. For registration, please Contact: 022-62427544, 022-28451204 Extn: 9, Mob. 8291894644 (Tel booking: 11 am to 5 pm daily). Online registration: [www.oneday.globalpagoda.org](http://www.oneday.globalpagoda.org).

## Celebrating 50 years of the journey of Dhamma

To mark the Golden Jubilee year of the completion of the first Vipassana Course in India, the following events are organized:

### 1. Special event at the Global Vipassana Pagoda

A special event at the Global Vipassana Pagoda is arranged on January 30, 2019, on the occasion of a birth anniversary of Shri S. N. Goenka. It will be a whole day program open to all Vipassana meditators in this tradition. ATs, Trustees and Dhamma servers who had an opportunity to assist Goenkaji in his noble mission of spread of Dhamma, in any way, are specially invited to attend this event. The presentation/video, capturing the journey of Dhamma and launch of books, will be a part of this event.

### 2. One-day course at Panchayati Wadi, Mumbai

On June 21, 1969, Mr. S. N. Goenka arrived in India from Myanmar, bringing back Vipassana, the priceless jewel of Dhamma and the first 10-day Vipassana course was arranged in a country of its origin after a gap of nearly two millennia.

This first Vipassana course was conducted by Mr. S. N. Goenka in Pancayati Wadi rest-house, near Kalbadevi, Mumbai from July 3 to 13, 1969 with 14 students, setting the wheel of Dhamma in motion in the modern times. To mark this momentous event, a one-day course is arranged at the same Pancayati Wadi for Vipassana meditators in this tradition on January 31, 2019. **Venue:** Pancayati Wadi rest-house, 41, second Panjarapol lane, CP Tank, Mumbai-04.

For registration of the above two events, please Contact: 022-62427544, 022-28451204 Extn: 9, Mob. 8291894644 (Tel booking: 11 am to 5 pm daily). Online registration: [www.oneday.globalpagoda.org](http://www.oneday.globalpagoda.org)

### 3. Documentation of the Journey

A team under the guidance of Mr. Vimal Surana is collecting all kinds of anecdotes, memories and reminiscences of students with Pujya Guruji & Mataji, including students' experiences in the spread of Dhamma. Those who have been associated with Vipassana for a long time are requested to contribute their experiences to inspire the future generations. If you have any audios, videos, text or photos containing dialogues/discussions/interactions with Goenkaji or Mataji, please send it to the following address for archiving purpose. It may be used on the appropriate occasions. Contact: Mr. Rampratap Yadav V.R.I. Dhammagiri, Igatpuri, 422403, Dist Nashik, E-mail [50yearsofdhamma@vridhamma.org](mailto:50yearsofdhamma@vridhamma.org). WhatsApp no. 7977380198 (will be available from December 7, 2018) or Ms. Jyoti Deo (WhatsApp no. +91 9820997136).

### Maha Saṅghadāna at Global Vipassana Pagoda

**13th January 2019:** On the occasion of the death (19th Jan.) Saṅghadāna is being organized at **9:30 a.m.** After that meditators can meditate from 11 a.m. onwards. Those who wish to take part in the meritorious sangha dāna, 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](mailto:audits@globalpagoda.org).....

### DHAMMA DOHA

*Samyaka darśana jñāna se, karen citta kā śodha;  
Dharmabodha taba taba jāge, 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 ajñā kā ajñā;  
Jisane dekhā svayaṃ ko, vahī huā sarvajñā.*

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 hoyā.*

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

*Jaise sūrya prakāśa se, tāra 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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