



WORDS OF DHAMMA

*Moghā jāti ca vaṇṇo ca, silameva kiruttamaṃ,
Silena anupetassa, sutenattho na vijjati.
Khattiyo ca adhammaṭṭho, vesso ca dhammanissito,
Te pariccajjubho loke, upapajanti duggatīṃ.*

[Jātaka Aṭṭhakathā 362, Sīlavīmaṃsajātakavaṇṇanā 66-67]

Worthless are caste and creed, precious is Sīla
Unworthy is a learned if immoral. If a Kshatriya is
immoral or a Vaiśya too, leaving both [the Deva and
Human realms] they will journey to the lower planes.

There was No Caste Discrimination, on the Path of The Buddha.

For centuries prior to the Buddha, the country was ridden by the evils of caste and creed. One born in a low caste or doing jobs considered inferior would be considered as a lowly and inferior person.

Professions, jobs and castes had their own and different high and low, superior and inferior categories-

1. Śudra – The low born
2. Caṇḍāla – The corpse burners
3. Bhangi – The sweepers
4. Cammāra – The cobblers

These groups were regarded as low castes.

1. Brāhmaṇa
 2. Kshatriya – The Warriors
 3. Vaiśya – The Traders
- were considered as Upper castes.

Similarly, Brāhmaṇas were considered upper and lower, depending on their clans

Inferior clans:-

1. Kosiya Gotra
2. Bhāradwāja Gotra

Superior clans:-

1. Gotama Gotra
2. Moggalāna Gotra
3. Kaccāna Gotra
4. Vāsiṭṭha Gotra

Handicrafts and artisan skills were also divided in to superior and inferior groups.

Job skills and Handicrafts considered being superior:-

1. Writing skills
2. Printing skills
3. Book-keeping, accountancy

Work considered as inferior:-

1. Making objects with bamboo/ cane
2. Pottery – making earthen pots and utensils
3. Leather craft (making shoes and other things with animal skin)
4. Nāpitas – Barbers (those who cut hair)

Jobs considered to be extremely low and menial were:-

1. The job of lifting and cleaning faeces and human waste.
2. Removing and cleaning garbage trash and waste.

Professions regarded as lofty were:-

1. Agriculture
2. Business and trading
3. Cattle rearing.

The Pali Cannons list the following five as the low races and the work done by these clans were considered inferior/ base :-

1. Caṇḍāla kula – burning corpses in the crematorium
2. Nesāda kula – hunting birds and animals
3. Venakula – cleaning lavatories
4. Rathakāra kula – making things with the skin of dead animals
5. Pukkusa kula – removing and cleaning garbage

Similarly people performing the following jobs were also considered inferior:-

1. Nālakāra – basket makers - making baskets etc. with bamboo.
2. Kumbhakāra – Potters - making clay pitchers etc.
3. Pesakāra – Weavers – weaving clothes
4. Cammakāra – Those who made leather articles
5. Nāpita – Barbers – those who cut hair.

The higher castes would consider themselves becoming unclean, if even the shadow of the lowest castes fell on them. If by chance they were touched by such a shadow, they would, out of anger, even beat them up. So the very inferior classes would move around very carefully and hesitantly, whenever they came to the towns; ensuring that their shadows did not fall on anyone.

The Lord Buddha took revolutionary steps amidst such shocking / horrible conditions. He included the lowest of low castes in his Sangha. One who became a part of the Sangha would automatically become venerated. The king revered him and the royal-officials honoured him; the business magnates and the bankers revered him; and the Brāhmaṇas honoured him. In this way the Buddha took a major step to uplift the lower castes.

The Lord Himself did not believe in the caste system. Having joined the Sangha no Bhikkhu was discriminated on the basis of his caste. Bhikkhus, having joined the Sangha, would also go for alms to the homes of all high and low castes. In those days, people were habituated to address the lower castes at times as Caṇḍāla and Vasala. If any new Bhikkhu addressed another in a similar fashion, then it was declared an offence as per the Vinaya laid by the Lord.

An incidence from those days: – Prakriti, a young sixteen year old untouchable girl was filling water for her family from the wells meant for the untouchables. Poverty stricken, she was attired in dirty and crumpled, torn and old clothes. Ananda, a disciple of the Buddha, was coming towards her. Ananda was also born in a Kshatriya clan. He was fair complexioned and a rich man with an imposing personality. He was also the first cousin of the Lord. It was the season of scorching summer. His throat was parched by thirst. Seeing the girl filling her pitchers by the well, he requested her for a drink of water. The untouchable girl was bewildered. She felt, “Noticeably, though a Bhikkhu, this person is certainly from one of the upper classes. But, he is unaware that I belong to a family of untouchables and this well is meant for the untouchables.” So she informs Ananda, “I am from a lower caste and I cannot give this water meant for the untouchables, to a person of the higher clans.”

Ananda tells the untouchable girl – “Sister, I asked you for water, not your caste.”

Persuaded by Bhikkhu Ananda, the bewildered girl hesitantly gave him water. Having rapturously quenched his thirst, the Bhikkhu left from there.

Suddenly a thought came to the mind of the untouchable girl. If this young man of a high caste has taken water from my hands, certainly, he will also agree to make me his better half. She approached Bhikkhu Ananda hastily and presented her proposal. The Bhikkhu immediately declined. She was very disappointed. Then Ananda explained to the untouchable girl, “I do not refuse your proposal because of caste discrimination. I have taken the vow of life-long celibacy [to lead a holy life] and so am incapable of accepting your proposal.” He further told her, “our Great Compassionate One, the Buddha, has given refuge to all human beings. You too, go and seek refuge in the Buddha. The Lord gives refuge to all, even those considered inferior castes by society. There is no discrimination on caste or creed over there. Having taken refuge in the Buddha, many lower castes have by virtue of Vipassana meditation, become Noble. Those who are today looked down upon, people start respecting and paying homage to them. Go and unhesitatingly seek refuge in the Buddha. There are many Sadhavis [female meditators / nuns] there and Mother Mahāpajāpati will take proper care of you.”

Hearing this, the untouchable girl Prakriti felt happy. She then went and took refuge in the Buddha. She was given Vipassana and in due course became a meditator/nun.

Once the Buddha was on his alms rounds with his Bhikkhu Sangha on the high way of Rajgir, the capital of Magadha. The city sweeper, Suneet, was at that time cleaning the roads with his broom. Being born in a family of destitutes and considered to be untouchable, the thought arose in his

mind, “my shadow should not fall on the Buddha.” So, very hesitantly, he stood aside with folded hands. The Lord read his thoughts. Seeing the sweeper Suneet, a victim of the unforgiving, ruthless society’s twisted ways; the Lord’s heart was filled with compassion. He beckoned him and along with his Bhikkhu Sangha, brought him to the Vihara in Rajgiri’s Veṇuvana. The Buddha showed him the way to practise Vipassana meditation. Sweeper Suneet was ordained to the Sangha. He started practising Vipassana in the forests and became an Arahant – a fully liberated one. He truly became a Brāhmaṇa from a sweeper.

Similarly Sopaka, a child born in the Caṇḍāla clan, became an orphan at the age of four. Stricken by poverty, his uncle felt he was a burden. At the age of seven, feeling extremely annoyed, his uncle tied him hard to a corpse and left him in the crematorium, to be devoured and eaten by wild animals. The Great Compassionate One saw this incidence. He sent a Bhikkhu to free Sopaka and had him brought to the Vihara. There he was ordained and got his object of meditation. In due course, the child Sopaka, practised diligently and became an Arahant.

History notes that Baba Saheb Ambedkar took another major step. When he drafted the Constitution of India, he left no scope for the discrimination of high and low castes. A human being is a human being. He created scope for those considered inferior castes to get educated. The lower ranks of the society went for higher studies and even became secretaries in the Government. Who would then call them inferiors? In this way Baba Saheb Ambedkar made a significant contribution by breaking the barrier of caste discrimination.

Unfortunately the system of casteism, superiority, inferiority, and untouchability exists even today to some extent in the villages. It has not been eradicated.

I remember, while living in Burma [Myanmar], I was born and brought up in a severe orthodox family. There I had seen that not only sweepers and cobblers, but also many others were considered as low castes. We were forbidden to even drink the water touched by such people. Baba Saheb brought about a lot of changes to this. But still, society keeps considering the low borns as inferiors and the upper castes as superiors.

Just like the Lord Buddha brought about a major revolution by ordaining the lower castes to the Sangha, so also, Baba Saheb Ambedkar gave them respectability by spreading education. It is a misfortune to the nation, that it has not been eradicated completely.

Now Vipassana has taken another step forward. People of all castes and creeds join Vipassana courses. No one is discriminated as superior or inferior. All stay as equals and practise together. All sit and eat together, reside together. Now the situation is such that, in Vipassana, a large number of people who are called Dalitas, have been trained further and established as Teachers. When now a person of the Dalita class sits on the Dhamma Seat, the person is not a Dalita, but a teacher of Dhamma. Meditators who come for a course, bow to the teacher, irrespective of whether they are a Brāhmaṇa, a Kshatriya, or a Vaiśya. They pay their respects to the teacher

and learn Dhamma from him. There is no scope for caste discrimination in the teachings of the Buddha. The knowledge of Vipassana meditation and practice is the important essence and is available for all. Vipassana is aiding in breaking these barriers in a big way. Let us see, how much this transforms the society as a whole! Only when this misfortune of the society and the country is eradicated, will there be happiness. Only then will there be welfare!

Kalyānmitra,
S. N. Goenka



Peaceful Demise

Shri Natwarlal Dalal of Ghatkopar [Mumbai] passed away peacefully on the 7th of January. Since 1997 he had been serving the meditators a lot, as an Assitant Teacher. He also kept offering a lot of other Dhamma Services. May he attain peace and welfare as a result of the merits of the Dhamma service given by him!

Similarly, Shri Pravin Chandra Desai of Ghatkopar, [Mumbai] had been serving since 2007 as an Assistant Teacher. For sometime now, he had taken up residence in his native town, Rajkot. He used to conduct many courses at Dhamma Kota in Rajkot. He died of heart disease, but we received the information after a long gap. May he attain peace and welfare as a result of the merits of the Dhamma service given by him!

Shri Balchandra Poddar of Kota [Rajasthan] was a childhood friend of Reverend Guruji, in Myanmar. He had learnt Vipassana Meditation from Rev. Guruji Sayagyi U Ba Khin. After coming to India, he got involved in his business. When Vipassana came back to

India, he joined the courses here. His entire family has assisted in the spread of Vipassana and construction work at centres since the 1970s. He peacefully breathed his end, on the 1st of February, 2013. He attained peace and welfare as a result of his Punya Pāramitas.



Pali syllabus (pariyatti and patipatti) at the Vipassana Global Pagoda, 2013

90-day Residential course from 1.7.13 to 30.9.13
Last date for application is 15. 5. 13. Application can be sent through www.vridhamma.org, **Contact:** VRI, Dhammagiri Global Vipassana Pagoda near Essel world, Borivali(west) 400091



One year Pali Diploma Course on the teachings of the Buddha and Vipassana

VRI and the Dept of Philosophy, University of Mumbai have jointly prepared a syllabus for Diploma course in Pali for the session 13-14 in which the theoretical and practical aspects of the teachings of the Buddha and Vipassana will be taught through the medium of English. Venue Jnaneshwar Bhavan, Dept of Philosophy, Mumbai University, Vidya Nagari Campus Kalina Santacruz(E), Mumbai 400098.

Application form can be had from 1st July to 15th July from Monday to Friday between 11.30 a.m and 2.30 p.m, **Duration of course** is from 20.7.13 to 31.3. 2014, Time 2.30 p.m. to 6.30 p.m, **Eligibility:** Minimum 12th pass. It will be compulsory for them to sit a vipassana course during the Diwali vacation

For more information please contact: 1) Dr Sharda Sanghavi phone 022-23095413, Mob. 09223462805 E-mail s_ sanghvi@hotmail.com, 2) Mrs Baljit Lamba mob 09833518979, 3) Alka Vengulkar mob 09820583440



ADDITIONAL RESPONSIBILITY

Teachers

1. U Myat Kyaw, To serve as Centre Teacher for Dhamma Maṇḍala, Mandalay, and co-ordinator for jail courses in Myanmar.
2. Daw Saw Mya Yee, To serve as children course co-ordinator in Myanmar
- 3-4. Dr. Khin Maung Aye & Dr. Daw Kyi Sein, UK, To conduct courses in Prisons, (Except in Myanmar)

Senior Assistant Teachers

1. Mr. Sudarshan Grover, Thane, To assist centre teacher in serving Dhamma Giri

Assistant Teachers

1. Mr. Navinchandra Mehta, Dombivali, To assist centre teacher in serving Dhamma Giri

NEW RESPONSIBILITY

Senior Assistant Teachers

1. Mr. Dilip Kate, Solapur
2. Mr. Mahavir Prasad Jain, Amravati
3. Mr. Manik Chikate, Chandrapur
4. Mr. Bhaurao Thakre, Nagpur
5. Mr. Prem Narayan Sharma, Nagpur
6. Mrs. Pushpalata Kolte, Nagpur

7. Mr. Kaushalendra Pratap Singh, Delhi
8. Dr. Subhash Sethi, Gurgaon
9. Mrs. Jass Madaan, Faridabad
10. Mr. Rajendra Prasad, New Delhi
11. Mr. Kaushal Kumar Bhardwaj, Delhi
12. Mr. Guneet Singh Lehl, New Delhi
13. Mr. Ashok R. Babhale, Mumbai
14. Mr. Itai Brauer, Israel
15. Mr. Norman Faulkner, Canada

NEW APPOINTMENTS

Assistant Teachers

1. Mr. Kewal Chand Jain, Hyderabad
2. Mr. Anil Jariwala, Surat
3. Mr. Prahlad Gajbe, Nagpur
4. Mrs. Ujjwala Addiga, Secunderabad
5. Mr. Vijay Kumar Khanna, Lucknow
6. Mrs. Kumud Shah, Mumbai
7. Mrs. Damayanti Bodana, Mumbai
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30. Ms. Marguerite Kiss, France
31. Mr. Chaiwat Limchitti, Thailand

Children's Course Teachers

1. Mrs. Vandana Parakh, Delhi
2. Mr. Anil Karande, Kolhapur
3. Mr. Amol Mithari, Kolhapur
4. Mr. Sachin Powar, Ichalkaranji
5. Mr. Sambhaji Mohite, Kolhapur
6. Mr. Nagesh Swami, Satara
7. Mr. Vijay Landage, Sangli
- 8-9. Mr. Ravindra & Mrs. Sunita Meshram, Ratnagiri
10. Dr Mrs Kiran Amin Jabalpur
11. Dr Gulshan Rai Makan Jabalpur
12. Mrs Neena Kapoor Patna
13. Mr Mg Thiha, Myanmar
14. Ms. Ma Su Thet, Mon, Myanmar
15. Ms Daw Nan Kyu Aye, Myanmar
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17. Ms Daw Moh Moh Kyi, Myanmar
18. Ms Daw Than Than Hyein, Myanmar
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30. Mr. Rafael Caudros, USA
31. Ms. Vikky McArthur, USA
32. Mr. Thomas Hicks, Canada
33. Mr Tom Wolfe, UK
34. Mr Nicholas Potter, UK
35. Mr Tom Pope, UK

Children's Meditation Courses in Mumbai

Date	Course site	Age (years)	Registration
21-4	Goregaon	10-16	17 & 18-4
19-5	Goregaon	10-16	15 & 16-5
16-6	Goregaon	10-16	12 & 13-

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

Course Venues: Goregaon: Vipassana Counselling & Research Centre, Siddharth Municipal General Hospital, Goregaon (W), Tel: 2624-2025 & 98690-23884.

Ulhasnagar	Second Sundays	94225-50489
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Please call two days in advance for registration.

NB *Please bring 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.

**Two days Residential Children's Course**

2 days residential course, for children aged 12-15 years is being organised at Dhamma Vahini, the Titavala Vipassana Centre. Meditators are requested to note the dates and timings for reservations as given below. Kindly make the reservations on time.

Please contact during the office hours to make reservations for the 26th -27th May course.(Only for boys). Reservations open after May 15th. Phone nos. 022-25162505/25011096. Similarly, please contact during the working hours to make reservations for the 6th -7th June course.(Only for girls). Reservations open after May 25th . Phone nos. 022-25162505/25011096.

**8 days Residential Course for Teenagers**

Dhamma Vahini would be organising teenager's course, only for **boys** from the 17th to 25th of May and from the 28th of May to 5th of June, only for **girls**. The schedule for teenager's courses to be held at other centres has been decided separately. Kindly check Pg.1 , column 3 of the Course-Schedule for the necessary information and booking details to contact the centres.

**Wanted able guides at Global Pagoda**

The number of visitors at the Global Vipassana Pagoda has been increasing day by day. We therefore need many expert guides who are soft spoken and who can ably guide the visitors. Meditators after judging themselves in this light should contact us either by e-mail or on phone giving full details about them. They will be paid expenses for coming and going, besides food and resting at the site. They will also get an opportunity to meditate in the peaceful atmosphere there.

Phone 022-28451204; (91) 22-337475011 (30 Lines)
e-mail pr@globalpagoda.org

**One-day course with respected Guruji at the Global Pagoda on the auspicious occasion of the Buddha Purnima.**

The course will be conducted in the main Dome of the Global Vipassana Pagoda from 11 am to 4 pm on May 25, 2013, Saturday. **Pujya Guruji will give discourse at 3 pm; non-meditators are welcome to attend the discourse. DhammaSevaks are needed for the course.** Registration is compulsory for Sitting as well as giving Dhamma Seva. Register online at www.oneday.globalpagoda.org Registration on Phone [between 11am and 5pm]: (022)33747501–ext: 9; (022)28451170 –ext: 9; (022)33747543; (022)33747544

**DHAMMA DOHAS**

*Jāti varṇa kā gotra kā, caḍḍhā sīsa abhimāna,
Shuddha dharama ko choḍkar, bhaṭaka gayā nādāna.*

Puffed with pride of Caste, creed, and clan, Forgetting the path of pure dhamma, the vain has lost his way.

*Jahām jāti kā, varṇa kā, jahām gotra kā nāj,
Dharama na ṭika pāye vahām, ahaṅkār kā rāja.*

Where there is vanity, In the name of caste, creed and gotra
Pride rules and Dhamma cannot survive.

*Jab jab manuj samāja meṃ, jātivāda baḍha jāye,
Tab tab maṅgal dharama ke, sumana sabhi kumhalāṃy.*

Whenever discrimination increases in human society,
The flowers of welfare of dhamma wither away.

*With much mettā,
A Vipassana meditator*

*Suddha dharama jaga meṃ jāge, to ho saba khusahāla,
Sampradāya jab pramukha ho, to hon saba badahāla.*

When pure Dhamma arises in the world, all are benefitted
When sectarianism takes over, then all are in woe.

*Baḍhā dharama ke nāma para, sampradāya purjora,
Jana jana mana vyākula huā, dukha chāyā saba ora.*

In the name of Dhamma, sectarianism has spread,
The minds of all are perplexed, sufferings envelop all round..

With best compliments from

MOTILAL BANARSIDASS

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