

# Vipassana Newsletter

In the tradition of Sayagyi U Ba Khin,

as taught by S. N. Goenka

Vol. 11, No. 9: 2 September 2001  
Published every month

Vipassana Research Institute  
Dhamma Giri, Igatpuri-422 403, Maharashtra

## WORDS OF DHAMMA

"*Sukh±ya, bhikkhave, vedan±ya r±g±nusayo pah±tabbo,  
dukkh±ya vedan±ya pajigh±nusayo pah±tabbo,  
adukkhamasukh±ya vedan±ya avijj±nusayo pah±tabbo.*"

—*Sa½yutta Nik±ya 2.4.251*

Eradicate the latent tendency of craving using pleasant sensations (by equanimous observation understanding their changing nature), eradicate latent tendency of aversion using unpleasant sensations and eradicate the latent tendency of ignorance using neutral sensations.

## GOENKAJI'S THAILAND TOUR

Goenkaji and Mataji visited Thailand from 25 June to 4 July, 2001. The highlights of his tour were his Dhamma discourse at the Chulalongkorn University, his meeting with the scholars of the M. L. Maniratana Bunnag Dhamma Society Fund and his visit to *Dhamma ¼bh±, Phisanulok*.

The Dhamma Society Fund (MDS) under the patronage of H. H. the Supreme Patriarch of Thailand is going to publish an international edition of the *Tipiþaka* in Roman script. MDS Roman edition is based on the text of the *Chajþha Sa±gayana* CD-ROM of Vipassana Research Institute, which in turn is based on the *Chajþha Sa±yana* edition in Myanmar script. In Bangkok, Goenkaji visited the International *Tipiþaka* Hall in the Chulalongkorn University on 26 June and met with the eminent Pali scholars of MDS in Chulalongkorn University. He was informed about their efforts to bring out a flawless edition of the *Chajþha Sa±yana* text in Roman text. Goenkaji gave them his best wishes for their editorial efforts. Goenkaji also said that the efforts of the MDS scholars would help VRI in the next version of its *Chajþha Sa±yana* CD-ROM.

On 28 June, he was invited by the Dhamma Society Fund and the Chulalongkorn University to give a Dhamma talk that was presided over by H. R. H. Princess Galyani Vadhana of Thailand. This was telecast live worldwide on the global channel of TV 5. The subject of his Dhamma talk was "Vipassana Meditation and *Tipiþaka*". In the talk Goenkaji narrated his own experience while explaining how benefits of the practice of Vipassana attracted him to *Tipiþaka* (the words of the Buddha) and how the *Tipiþaka*, in turn, inspired him. The *Tipiþaka* clarified why he was asked to practise in this way by his teacher Sayagyi U Ba Khin. He narrated the experience of his first ten-day course:

I was also asked to keep my attention steadfastly fixed to the area at the entrance of the nostrils *parimukha½ sati½ upajþhapetv±*, that is, *n±sikagge* and the middle part of the upper lip *uttarojþhassa majþhimappadesa*. I tried to keep my attention at this small area with the awareness of natural respiration at

a stretch as long as possible. I understood the reason behind this technique a little later. In a day or two, the breath started becoming shorter and shorter, subtler and subtler, finer and finer. I came to know that if the area of concentration is small, the object of concentration is subtle and the continuity of the awareness is maintained uninterrupted for some time, the mind naturally becomes sharper and sharper and more and more sensitive. It starts feeling some sensation (*vedan±*) or the other on this small part of the body. This started happening on the second and the third day.

From the fourth day onwards when the meditation technique was switched to Vipassana, I was amazed to feel sensations throughout the body from the top of the head to the tips of the toes. With every sensation I could realise the nature of arising and passing away, which was *bh±van±may± paññ±*, to experience the nature of *anicca*. At the devotional level or the intellectual level it would have been merely *suta-may± paññ±* and *cint±may± paññ±*, which according to my teacher cannot take us to the final goal of liberation. The Buddha gives importance to *bh±van±may± paññ±*, which was totally missing in my previous meditational practices. And now I understand that **feeling of sensation on the body is the crux of the meditational teachings of the Buddha.**

In my Hindu tradition I was quite confident that one should not indulge in sensual objects. I was taught not to react with craving or aversion when I came in contact with any sensual object, pleasant or unpleasant. The great discovery of the Buddha was that at the apparent level it seems that one is reacting to the sensual objects. But at the actual level, one is reacting to the body sensations. That is why in *Pajicca samupp±da*, the Buddha did not say *sa½yatana paccay± ta°h±* but he made the natural process very clear saying that *sa½yatana paccay± phasso, phassa paccay± vedan±*, and *vedan± paccay± ta°h±*. So the craving for acquiring the pleasant and

the craving for getting rid of the unpleasant is because of the sensations that one experiences on the body. This made me understand very clearly that the scientific discovery of the Buddha took me to the root of all the problems by developing the faculty to feel the different sensations on the body and not to react. Understanding that every sensation, pleasant, unpleasant or neutral has the same characteristic of *anicca* or *udayabbaya*, arising and passing away. I was greatly impressed by the teaching of the Enlightened One when I found that it is not merely an intellectual game or acceptance by blind devotion. I found that the Buddha was interested in understanding the Truth at the experiential level. Although *suta-may± paññ±* and *cint±-may± paññ±* have their own importance to give us inspiration and guidance, but actually, it is the *bh±van±-may± paññ±* that gives the result of changing the unwholesome behaviour pattern of the mind at the root level.

As I continued to practise, it became clearer and clearer to me that the body sensation plays a very important role to take us on the path of misery. And the same body sensation helps us to proceed on the path of liberation. The sensations are always there so long as one is alive but when one remains ignorant, one keeps on reacting to the sensations by generating craving and aversion. With Vipassana, the scientific teaching of the Enlightened One, one develops the faculty of *sati*, that is awareness of the sensations and at the same time *sampajañña*<sup>1/2</sup>, the *paññ±* of the impermanent nature of the sensations. *At±p<sup>2</sup> sampaj±no satim±*. These two faculties help the meditator to come out of the unwholesome blind reactions to the sensations generating craving and aversion, *lobha* and *dosa*.

If the Buddha's teaching urged me only to abstain from *lobha* and *dosa* towards sensual objects, certainly it would not have attracted me because that was already present in my traditional teaching. But when I was asked to abstain from *lobha* and *dosa* pertaining to the body sensations, it became so clear that I was now working with *anusaya kilesa*, the impurities stored at the depth of the mind strengthening the unwholesome behaviour pattern at the root level. It was very clear to me that there are many methods of meditation which help one to purify the *paritta citta*, the surface of the mind but they do not deal with the *anusaya*, the deepest level of the so called unconscious mind, the root cause of generating and multiplying the habit pattern of mental impurities.

After explaining how Vipassana is spreading round the world among all classes, religions, regions of the world, Goenkaji added,

Thus, observing sensations equanimously as taught by the Buddha has proved to be a panacea, a universal remedy for all the miseries. Buddha's words are so clear in this respect when he says, *vedan± samosara<sup>o±</sup> sabbe dhamm±*, everything that arises in the mind starts flowing with the sensation on the body. Therefore sensation plays such an important part in generating misery for us when we remain ignorant of the sensations and keep on reacting with *lobha* and *dosa* and so also the body sensations play a

very important role when we remain aware of the sensations and don't react with *lobha* and *dosa* however pleasant or unpleasant they may be.

This helps every one to realise the universal truth of Anicca at the experiential level within the framework of the body. Observing the sensation without generating *lobha* and *dosa* gives the same result of purification of the mind to any one who practises it. That is why the technique is accepted by so many around the world.

On 29 June, over 300 old students came to meet Goenkaji at the Hilton International, Bangkok. They had submitted their questions in writing. Goenkaji's answers in English were translated into Thai.

On 30 June, Goenkaji formally presented the *Chajjha Sa<sup>a</sup>g±yana* CD-ROM to H. H. the Supreme Patriarch of Thailand who accepted it on behalf of the Dhamma Society Fund. Goenkaji also presented the *Abhidhamma Pijaka* and commentarial literature in *Devan±gar<sup>2</sup>* script published by VRI to the Supreme Patriarch. Goenkaji sought the blessings of the Sangha on this occasion.

On 1 July, Goenkaji and Mataji went to *Phitsanulok* to visit the newly constructed centre *Dhamma ¼bh±*. Phitsanulok comes from Vishnuloka. Vishnu in Hindi or Sanskrit is *Ve<sup>o</sup>hu* (*Ve<sup>o</sup>1u*) in Pali. We see in the *Tipijaka* that this noble deity comes to pay respect to the Buddha.

The beautiful buildings of the centre with sloping roofs at various levels are built symmetrically on an east west axis. The architecture is modern Thai. Goenkaji and Mataji took a walking tour of the centre in the evening. Then they meditated for an hour with meditators in the Dhamma hall.

The centre is constructed on a scenic lush green plateau against the backdrop of hills in the east. The central part of the 61-acre property is reserved for the centre. Extensive landscaping has been done. Many roads have been constructed on the property. Rerouting a natural stream that was flowing through the property has resulted in a boundary of a water canal on the west and south; and many water pools within the property. The plot that will have a housing project for meditators has been separated. The beautiful bamboo grove on the east side of the centre has been preserved intact. There are many big fruit trees all over the property and many new ones have been planted.

On 2 July, the trustees of *Dhamma Kañcana* sought Goenkaji's advice and approval for the proposed plan of the centre. This centre is located in the west of Thailand where there is considerable Mon population. This area is part of the ancient *Suva<sup>o±</sup>abh<sup>3</sup>mi*, which preserved the Dhamma in its purity for many centuries. May Dhamma spread again in all its purity in this land! May the people of this area enjoy peace and prosperity!

Goenkaji answered questions about the technique in a question-answer session in the Dhamma Hall on 3 July. His answers clarified the basic practice of Anapana and Vipassana.

In the evening, he gave a Dhamma talk to the assistant teachers, trustees and Dhamma workers. He exhorted them to live an exemplary life and to serve selflessly for their own good and for the good of others.

On the morning of 4 July, Goenkaji left *Dhamma ¼bh±* for Myanmar.

## QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

**Question:** What is the tradition of pure Dhamma?

**Goenkaji:** Understand what pure Dhamma is: the law of nature, the truth about mind and matter and their interaction; how mind and matter are influencing each other and how this can be experienced. It is not the play of useless intellectual games. The Buddha wanted us to experience Dhamma.

When you start experiencing the truth at the depth of the mind, you find that it is the same with everyone. Not just at the surface level, the *paritta citta*, the conscious mind, but at the depth. The problem lies at the depth of the mind where the behaviour pattern of reaction begins. There is a Pali word, *nati*, which means inclination. At the depth of the mind where there is an inclination towards reaction, the unwholesome process begins. For example, the reaction of anger is triggered by this inclination and one continues to react with this anger for a long time. As this repeats itself over and over again, the behaviour pattern of reacting with anger is strengthened. This happens similarly with passion or any other defilement.

For behaving like this you are responsible. No outside power is producing this behaviour. You are doing it out of ignorance. Now, with Vipassana you begin to understand, "Look at this game I'm playing. I am harming myself. I am making myself a prisoner of my own behaviour patterns." If you start observing this process deep within yourself, you will find that naturally it stops, and eventually you'll reach the stage where even this inclination towards reaction does not arise. What else can pure Dhamma be than this? If you work at only the superficial level of the mind and either give it a good layer or else divert the attention to some other object in the attempt to come out of this pattern of reaction, you do find that the mind becomes calm. But this is only at the surface of the mind. Deep inside the same inclination towards reaction is still going on and unless you reach that point how will you really change this behaviour pattern? Vipassana is the way to reach that level and observe the reality as it is. Without your trying to change it, it will get changed if you simply observe it. In this way you are coming out of your prison, out of your bondage. This is why it is the only way, pure Dhamma, *ek±yano maggo*.

**Question:** What is your message to Vipassana meditators in the present context?

**Goenkaji:** Make use of wonderful Dhamma. Understand what Dhamma is. Don't take it as Hindu Dhamma or Buddhist Dhamma or Jain Dhamma. It has nothing to do with these organized religions. Dhamma is totally apart from these organized religions; it is a way of life enabling us to understand the universal law of nature.

This is Dhamma: how mind and matter interact, with their currents, cross-currents and undercurrents. And how, out of ignorance we keep on reacting in ways that make us so miserable. By observing all this you realize how this law of nature applies to everyone. If you don't enjoy burning yourself, then you keep your hand out of the fire. By reacting blindly you are burning yourself, harming yourself. Experience this. Merely talking like this won't help. Let people experience it. More and more people should realize the reality of Dhamma, understanding that

Dhamma has to be experienced and that it is not an intellectual game. And for experiencing it, well, here is this wonderful technique which will take you to the depth of your mind to the point where mind and matter are interacting, and where you can apply the wisdom to take you out of the habit of reaction which is actually harming you. By applying this wisdom you are making your mind purer and purer in order to live a happier life, a more harmonious life.

(21 January 1995, Annual Meeting: *Dhamma Giri*)

## NEW VRI PUBLICATIONS

VRI has published four new books in Hindi for the benefit of Vipassana meditators:

*Sutta-s±ra I (D²ghanik±ya and Majjhimanik±ya)*

*Sutta-s±ra II (Sa½yuttanik±ya)* :

*Sutta-s±ra III (Aªguttaranik±ya and Khuddakanik±ya)*

(set of 3 books for Rs 135/-)

*Dhammapada* (Pali *g±thas* in *Devan±gar²* script with Hindi translation) Rs 25/-

Please add postage and handling charges as follows:

**For India and Nepal (Registered Printed Matter Postage):** All four books: Rs 30.00. **Outside India (Registered Printed Matter Airmail Postage):** All four books: Rs 300.00.

VRI has also published two additional books:

1. *Mah±satipath±na Sutta* with Gujarati translation (price: Rs 18:00). This book contains the Pali text in *Devan±gar²* script and the Gujarati translation on the facing page.

2. *Was the Buddha a Pessimist* (price: Rs 35.00), which is the English translation of the Hindi book, *Ky± Buddha Dukkhav±d² The?* by Goenkaji.

Please add postage and handling charges as follows:

**For India and Nepal (Registered Printed Matter):** One book: Rs 20.00. Both books: Rs 21.00. **Outside India (Registered Printed Matter Airmail Postage):** One book: Rs 90.00. Both books: Rs 165.00.

Payment must be made only by crossed bank draft payable at Igatpuri in favour of Vipassana Research Institute.

## AUDIO CDs OF MORNING CHANTINGS

The chanting of the Pali suttas by Goenkaji every morning during the ten-day Vipassana course is very inspiring for Vipassana meditators. So far, these were available in audio cassettes. Now VRI has prepared audio CDs containing these chantings with far superior sound quality. These are available as a set of five CDs, each containing two suttas.

Those who wish to acquire these CDs may send donation by crossed bank draft payable at Igatpuri in favour of Vipassana Research Institute.

One set (five CDs): Rs 400.00.

Four sets (of five CDs each): Rs 1500.00.

Please add postage and handling charges as follows:

**For India and Nepal (Registered Parcel):** One set: Rs 32.00. Four sets: Rs 50.00.

**Outside India (Registered Parcel Airmail Postage):** One set: Rs 650.00. Four sets: Rs 720.00.

## NEW APPOINTMENTS

### Assistant Teachers

1. Mr Basantlal Patel, *Jabalpur*
2. Mrs Sulochana S. Agarwal, *Nashik*
3. Mr B. Narendra Reddy, *Nizamabad*
4. Mr Kalendhar Reddy, *Karimnagar*
5. Mrs S. Sujatha, *Secunderabad*
6. Mrs Serasembe Satyawani, *Hyderabad*
7. Ms Carolyn Dean, *Australia*
8. Ms Pauline Marshall, *Australia*
9. Mrs Grace Reed, *Australia*
10. Ms Janet Zimmerman, *Australia*

### Children Course Teachers

1. Mr Devendra D. Ubale, *Igatpuri*
2. Ms A. B. Gayatri, *Dhamma Giri*
3. Mr Tarachand S. Jadhav, *Nashik*
4. Mrs Sindu H. Narnaware, *Nashik*
5. Ms Kavita A. Petkar, *Nashik*
6. Mr Madhukar S. Kale, *Nashik*
7. Mr Pandurang S. Pandit, *Nashik*
8. Mr Bakul G. Jadhav, *Nashik*
9. Mr Mohanbhai Gadia, *Rajkot*
10. Ms Hetal Patel, *Rajkot*
11. Mrs Deepali Mukherji, *Calcutta*
12. Mrs Prabha Bakre, *Calcutta*
13. Mr Devrath Arya, *Calcutta*
14. Mr Narayan Krishna Das, *Murshidabad*
15. Ms Falguni Sarkar, *24 Parganas*
16. Mrs Ranjana Agarwal, *New Delhi*
17. Mrs Manju Mittal, *New Delhi*

## VIPASSANA IN PRISONS

Vipassana courses are being organised in many prisons in India and abroad. In the past one year, 46 courses were organised in India in prisons at Delhi, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, and Calcutta, benefitting about 2,215 inmates. Outside India, courses were conducted in prisons in USA, UK, New Zealand and Taiwan.

### GOENKAJI'S DISCOURSES ON TELEVISION:

Goenkaji's discourses in Hindi are being broadcast on Zee TV every Monday from 7:00 to 7:30 a.m. and on Aastha TV channel daily at 5:00 p.m.

## TRAINING OF RCCCs AND CCTs

The programme for training of Regional Children Course Co-ordinators and Children Course Teachers is as follows:

- 16 and 17 September: *Pune*  
29 and 30 September: *Raipur*  
2 and 3 October: *Nagpur*  
6 and 7 October: *Bangalore*

All RCCCs and CCTs can attend these workshops. ATs, SATs and Teachers are also welcome to join as observers. **Contact Addresses:** Mrs Anita Dhiren Shah, 27, Satyam, Nagar Nigam Colony, Samta Main Road, Raipur-492 001. The other workshops will be held at the local Vipassana centres. Please refer to Schedule of Vipassana Courses for contact details of the Centres.

## DHAMMA NEWS

**Lumbini Vipassana Centre:** Construction of the main Dhamma hall of *Dhamma Janan<sup>2</sup>*, Lumbini Vipassana Centre seating about 160 meditators has started and will be completed by November 2001. The master-plan includes construction of residences for 100 male and 100 female students, residences for teachers and Dhamma workers, separate dining halls for male and female students, kitchen, storeroom etc. The estimated cost of construction is 30 million (Nepali rupees). Vipassana meditators wishing to share in the merits of this noble project may contact: Manager, Lumbini Vipassana Centre, Lumbini, Nepal. e-mail: dhammajanani@yahoo.com

**Dehradun Vipassana centre:** Construction of pagoda containing 80 meditation cells has been completed at *Dhamma Salila*, Dehradun Vipassana centre. This centre located in a mountain valley next to a flowing river in the Himalayas is extremely conducive for serious meditation. The first 20-day course here will start from 22 October 2001.

*Rare is a human life,*

*rare to encounter the Dhamma.*

*We are fortunate to have both;*

*let us work to banish suffering.*

*Doha by Goenkaji*

SUBSCRIPTION TO ENGLISH/HINDI MONTHLY NEWSLETTER: ANNUAL: RS 20/- (U.S. \$10/- OUTSIDE INDIA); LIFE SUBSCRIPTION: RS 250/- (U.S. \$100/- OUTSIDE INDIA) BY BANK DRAFT, PAYABLE AT IGATPURI IN FAVOUR OF VRI.

Edited and published by R. P. Yadav for VRI, Igatpuri 422 403 and printed at Akshar Chitra Press, 69B-Road, Satpur, Nashik 422007.

2 September 2001

Posted at Igatpuri, Dist. Nashik

Posting Day: *Purnima* of every month

POSTAL CLAUSE NO. 232 REG. NO. 49916/90  
LICENSED TO POST WITHOUT PREPAYMENT OF POSTAGE  
POSTAL REG. NO. AR/NSK 39/2001

### PRINTED MATTER

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Dist. Nashik, Maharashtra, India.

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