

Vipassana Newsletter

In the tradition of Sayagyi U Ba Khin,

as taught by S. N. Goenka

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Dhamma Giri, Igatpuri-422 403, Maharashtra

WORDS OF DHAMMA

*attānameva paṭhamam
patirūpe nivesaye
athaññāmanusāseyya
na kilisseyya paṇḍito.*

—Dhammapada 158

Let one first establish oneself
in what is proper,
and then instruct others.
Such a wise man will not be reproached.

DHAMMA: LIGHT OUT OF DARKNESS

by S. N. Goenka

(The following is an excerpt from Goenkaji's address to Vipassana meditators during the Annual Meeting at Dhamma Giri, January 1993. It has been adapted for the Newsletter.)

We have again assembled to review whatever we have done, to find whether there have been any defects, to understand how to eradicate those defects, and to make practical plans for the future. However, this meeting should not be like other ordinary social gatherings where people debate, pass resolutions, and forget all about it. No! The practical aspect of Dhamma is of utmost importance to us.

That is why, before starting this annual meeting, most of you participated in a long course, and after the meeting, many others of you will do so. This is a good sign. You are giving more importance to the practice, and discussions are based on this foundation. This healthy tradition should be maintained in the future; otherwise our service to suffering humanity will not be successful.

There is suffering; it cannot be denied. People are miserable and they are groping in the darkness, not knowing how to come out of misery. Throughout the world, there are conflicts and wars in the name of different religions. Unfortunately, this country, which takes pride in being the land of origin of the pure Dhamma, is also suffering from such conflicts. When the darkness is very deep, light is required.

It is good that the light has come and that the way is becoming clearer. In the past few years, a beginning has been made. People have started examining the technique and have found that it gives results. Wise people—intellectuals from different communities, sects, countries and traditions—have come to the Ganges of Vipassana, taken a dip and found that it is truly refreshing and fruitful.

Every step on the path has to be examined at the intellectual level: 'Is it rational and pragmatic?' And, at the actual level of practice: 'Is it fruitful? Is it giving benefit here and now?' The path leads you to the goal where you become totally liberated, an *arahant*. That is good, but what result does it give now? Is one coming out of misery now? Everyone who walks on the path finds that it is fruitful. Of course, the fruits differ from person to person according to one's own past accumulations and how one works now but the path is fruitful.

There is suffering all around, let people know that there is a way out. And you can do that only by your own way of life. If people find that there is a change for the better in you, they will be attracted. This is how Dhamma will spread.

Just as every town must have schools, colleges, hospitals and gymnasiums, it must also have some place where mental training is given to control and purify the mind. When one goes to a school, hospital or gymnasium, one is not converted from one religion to another. Similarly, one going to a Vipassana course is not converted to a different religion.

Vipassana is free from sectarianism. It has been universal and it should remain universal in the future. The purity of the path keeps it universal. Vipassana is helpful to one and all. Everyone who practices it is bound to benefit. This is a very important message that should reach the world. And it is possible to spread this message only when you yourself show that your mental impurities are being eradicated by this technique and you have started coming out of your misery. This will be the best example of the value of Dhamma.

Another important thing that we have started doing is making the theoretical aspect of Dhamma more

widely available. Because the practice was lost in many countries, the meaning of some of the Buddha's words was not clear and wrong interpretations were made. It is important for a meditator to understand the theoretical aspect of Dhamma in order to see whether what we are practicing is correct.

The theoretical aspect of Dhamma will support the practice of Dhamma. But understand that this should not become our main aim. Out of over-enthusiasm, if we start giving too much importance to the theoretical aspect of Dhamma and forget the practical part, we will miss everything. This practical aspect of Dhamma is of utmost importance. Keeping this in mind, we have to research the theoretical aspect of Dhamma.

May all of you become flag-bearers of Dhamma, torch-bearers of Dhamma. Take the message of Dhamma throughout the world to help people to come out of their misery.

Generate compassion, love and goodwill to help more and more people to come out of their misery. We have nothing to do with these organized religions. We have nothing to do with sectarianism. The suffering, the malady, is universal and here is a remedy which is also universal. See that it remains universal, and helps people to come out of their misery.

May more and more people come in contact with Dhamma. May more and more people start coming out of their misery. May more and more people start experiencing real peace, real harmony.

Bhavatu sabba maṅgalaṃ. ☸

Questions and Answers with Goenkaji: Dhamma Ābhā, Thailand, 3 July 2001

Question: Why do we observe only bodily sensations and not mental sensations?

Goenkaji: These are not only bodily sensations but also mental sensations. Mind is there. Otherwise who will feel the sensations? A dead body cannot feel sensations. Mind and matter are together.

The important thing is to feel the sensations on the body. At times, there is confusion when it is said that *vedanā* is a part of *nāma*. Yes, it is part of *nāma*. But the *vedanā* we work on are the *vedanā* on the body, which are felt by the mind. Both body and mind have to be there for one to feel sensations.

Even after the Bodhisatta practiced eight *jhānas* (from the fifth to eighth *jhāna*, mind is separate from body) he could not reach the final goal. Therefore, he had to discover a new *jhāna*—the ninth *jhāna*, or *saññāvedayitanirodha*. He had to come back to *vedanā* to get *vedanānirodha*. He started practicing with bodily sensations and reached the final goal.

It is clear in the Buddha's teaching and in reality as we experience it, that unless these two are together, we cannot practise Vipassana. When the stage of *nirodha* comes—*vedanānirodha*—there is no more *vedanā*. That means there is *salāyatana nirodha*—there is no *phassa*.

For that, there must be *nāmarūpanirodha*. If there is only *nāma*, how can you say *nāmarūpanirodha*? And vice versa. Both must be there. Then there is *nāmarūpanirodha*, *salāyatana nirodha*, *phassanirodha*, *vedanānirodha* and *tanhānirodha*.

All these things become clearer and clearer when one experiences the truth at the deeper level. It is enough for students to understand that without both *nāma* and *rūpa*, there cannot be bodily sensations. Bodily sensations must be there for the practise of Vipassana.

The Buddha wants us to practise on bodily *vedanā*. He says:

*Yathāpi vātā ākāse, vāyanti vīvidhā puthū;
puratthimā pacchimā cāpi, uttarā atha dakkhiṇā.
Saraṇā arañā cāpi, sītā uṇhā ca ekadā;
adhimattā parittā ca, puthū vāyanti mālūtā.
Tathevimasmim kāyasmim, samuppajjanti vedanā;
sukhadukkekhasamuppatti, adukkhamasukhā ca yā*

‘Just as in the sky, different winds blow, from east and west, from north and south, dust-laden or dustless, cold or hot, fierce gales or gentle breezes, many winds blow. So also *in this body*, pleasant, unpleasant or neutral sensations arise.’

Good Vipassana meditators understand that the *vedanā* they experience will pass away like the winds that come and go in the sky. Understanding this reality of body sensations, they keep on eradicating the impurities and ultimately become *arahats*. Such persons will never take another birth.

Again, the Buddha gives the example of a public guesthouse where people stay for a few days and then go away. People go there from the east, the west, the north and the south; people from different castes, communities and races.

Similarly, various sensations arise *in this body*—pleasant bodily sensations, unpleasant bodily sensations, bodily sensations that are neither unpleasant nor pleasant arise. Pleasant bodily sensations arise with attachment, unpleasant bodily sensations arise with attachment, bodily sensations that are neither unpleasant nor pleasant arise without attachment. Pleasant bodily sensations arise without attachment, unpleasant bodily sensations arise without attachment, bodily sensations that are neither unpleasant nor pleasant arise without attachment.

Good meditators keep on understanding that the *vedanā* have come to go away, not to stay. They don't get disturbed by these *vedanā*. The sky doesn't get disturbed by the winds coming and going. The guesthouse doesn't get disturbed by the different people coming in; it is neither elated if a rich person comes nor depressed if a poor person comes.

Similarly, a good meditator doesn't get disturbed by different sensations. ‘A very pleasant sensation. So what! It has come to go away.’ Or, ‘A very unpleasant sensation. So what? It has come to go away.’

Though the beings in the *arūpabrahmaloka* have mental sensations, they are not able to reach *arahat*hood

because they cannot practise Vipassana.

Therefore, we have to give importance to the bodily sensations and train the mind not to react. Therefore, to work according to the Buddha's teaching, one cannot ignore bodily sensations.

Question: Why do we move our attention throughout the body?

Goenkaji: Because we want to train the mind to feel sensations everywhere—wherever there is *rūpa*, wherever there is body. There are *vedanā* throughout the body, in every part of the body, in every particle of the body. And you have to train your mind to remain equanimous with every *vedanā* on every part of the body. When you move your attention, you learn to feel *vedanā* throughout the body.

When you are working on one part and you jump to another part with a gross sensation, you will be moving from one gross sensation to another gross sensation all the time. And when you keep on feeling only the gross sensations, your mind also tends to become gross, it cannot become subtle.

But when the mind moves all over the body, it starts feeling all kinds of sensations—gross or subtle, whatever they may be. Very soon, a time comes when there is no blind area anywhere in the body. There is sensation everywhere. And when you start feeling sensations on every part of the body and you remain equanimous, a time comes when you start feeling vibrations everywhere in the body. Mind has become very sensitive, so it feels even subtle vibrations.

When you can feel very gross sensations you have reached one station on the path—*udaya-vaya*, *udaya-vaya*, an important station. It becomes very clear to a meditator. 'Now a sensation has arisen, seems to stay for some time but eventually passes away.' This is the station of which the Buddha said: *samudayadhammānupassī vibharati* and *vayadhammānupassī vibharati*. They are separate. *Samudaya* (arising) and *vaya* (passing away) are separate. There is a gap between them.

But later on, as one keeps on working, the gross sensations turn into very subtle vibrations and it feels as if there is no gap between arising and passing. There is a gap, but it is very small. One observes *samudaya* and *vaya* simultaneously. They occur with great rapidity. When *samudaya* and *vaya* are separate, it is called *samudayavaya nāna*; when it is simultaneous, it is called *bhaṅga nāna*.

With *bhaṅga*, one has to be careful. This arising and passing with great rapidity has to be felt both inside and outside, everywhere. Only then is it real *bhaṅga*. This is also a station on the path—*bhaṅga nāna*.

The path after that is *saṅkhāra-upekkhā*. Deep-rooted *saṅkhāras* will come on the surface and pass away as you maintain equanimity. It all depends on how big a stock of *saṅkhāras* one has.

Someone may reach the final goal early; another may take a long time. We cannot say how much time it will take. One has to work properly, otherwise, one will not reach the final goal even if the stock is small. One may have a big stock but if one works properly, one may progress fast. Therefore, even after *saṅkhāra-upekkhā*, there is no

guarantee of how much time it will take. At this important station one has to be very careful. One understands that every sensation that comes is *anicca*, *anicca*. This is how one comes out of misery.

From the beginning, when you start observing sensations till you reach the final goal, sensations play an important role. If we make proper use of these sensations on the body, we will progress on the path. Otherwise we will only get more entangled in misery.

Therefore, a good meditator understands that, 'Every sensation that has arisen has arisen to liberate me.' If there is *sukha vedanā*, it has come to eradicate my *rāgānusaya*. If there is *dukkha vedanā*, it has come to eradicate my *patighānusaya*, *dosānusaya*.

One must be happy with every sensation. Make proper use of the sensation. If you get *sukha vedanā* or a free flow and you get elated and think that you have progressed a lot, then you are not a good meditator. If you get *dukkha vedanā* and you get depressed, feeling, 'Oh, my meditation has become bad. In the morning, I had so many pleasant sensations, oh, see now they are gone.' then you are not a good meditator. A good meditator welcomes every *vedanā*. Every *vedanā* is a friend. Every sensation is a tool for you to get liberated. That is why Buddha gave so much importance to sensations. As you move your attention, you find that there are sensations everywhere and you learn to remain equanimous with each sensation. ❀

VIPASSANA WORKSHOPS IN 2003

Logicstat Farmhouse, Delhi

Workshop for Assistant Teachers: October 21 to 26.

Workshop for Trustees and Dhamma workers: October 21 to 26.

Dharmashrīngā, Kathmandu

'Ghar Ghar mein Pali' Workshop: October 1 to 11.

Workshop for Assistant Teachers: October 12 to 16.

Workshop for Trustees and Dhamma workers: October 17 to 19

(These workshops will start at 8:00 p.m. on the first day and end at 11:00 a.m. on the last day.)

VIPASSANA NEWSLETTER ON THE WEBSITE

Current and past issues of the Hindi Vipassana Patrika and English Vipassana Newsletter can be downloaded from the VRI website:

<http://www.vri.dhamma.org/NewslettersHindi/index.html><http://www.vri.dhamma.org/newsletters/index.html>

Note: The subscription charges for the Vipassana Patrika and Newsletter have been increased because of the increased expenses of publication and dispatch.

ANNUAL: RS 30.00

LIFE SUBSCRIPTION: RS 500.00

Meditators who wish to subscribe to the Vipassana Newsletter or Patrika are requested to send payment only by crossed bank draft payable at Igatpuri to Vipassana Research Institute. **Payment by cheque will not be accepted.**

GOENKAJI'S INTERVIEWS ON ZEE TV

Zee TV is broadcasting a program called *Urja* featuring Goenkaji every Sunday at 9:00 a.m. In this program, Goenkaji answers questions about the different aspects of Dhamma (Dharma). Meditators may inform their family and friends about the opportunity to hear Goenkaji expound on the universal Dhamma.

Questions for Goenkaji may be sent to: *Urja*, Zee TV, Post Box No. 1, Andheri (W), Mumbai 400 099.
Email: response@zeenetwork.com
(Please put 'Urja' in the subject line.)

NEW VRI PUBLICATIONS

• **The Clock of Vipassana Has Struck: Rs 100.00**
This volume contains a collection of the writings and discourses of Sayagi U Ba Khin, a biographical sketch of his life and of the lives of the teachers who preceded him, and extensive interviews with Goenkaji.

• **Realising Change—Vipassana Meditation in Action: Rs 100.00**

This volume contains an outline description of the technique of Vipassana alongside stories of numerous meditators about their experiences with Vipassana. It also describes the various ways that individuals and organisations are applying the teaching.

Payment must be made only by crossed bank draft payable at Igatpuri to VRI. Please add additional postage and handling charges as follows:

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NEW RESPONSIBILITIES

Senior Assistant Teachers:

Mr. Dirk & Mrs. Mieke Taveirne, *Belgium*

NEW APPOINTMENTS

Assistant Teachers

1. Mrs. Shailaja Katkar, *Kolhapur*
2. Ms. Arati Kaikini, *Pune*
3. Mrs. Pushpa Pawar, *Dhule*

NEW VIPASSANA CENTRE IN THAILAND

A new Vipassana centre has been started at Bangkok, Thailand. The centre is located on a piece of land plot measuring 3,192 square metres in a quiet residential project about 20 kilometres from Don Muang International Airport. Goenkaji has named the new centre, *Dhamma Dh±n²* (City of Dhamma).

The facilities include Dhamma hall seating 150 students, Teacher's residence, dormitories for 60 male and female students, dining hall, kitchen and manager's residence. For more details, Email: <preecha@sq.co.th> or <vipthai@hotmail.com>

CHILDREN'S COURSES IN MUMBAI

<u>Date</u>	<u>Place</u>	<u>Eligibility</u>	<u>Registration</u>
2-11	Matunga	13-16 yrs	30 & 31-10
9-11	Andheri	13-16 yrs	6 & 7-11
7-12	Matunga	Std. 5 to 7	4 & 5-12
14-12	Andheri	Std. 5 to 7	11 & 12-12

Course Timing: 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Registration Phone Nos. (4 to 7 p.m.): Tel: 2683-4820

Course Addresses: **Matunga:** Amulakh Amichand High School, Rafi Ahmed Kidwai Road, Near S.N.D.T. College, King's Circle, Matunga (C.R.). **Andheri:** Dada Saheb Gaikwad Sansthan, Babasaheb Ambedkar Marg, RTO Corner, Four Bungalows, Andheri (W).

[NB *Please bring cushion. *Please register on the specified phone numbers. If you are unable to attend after registration, please inform in advance. *Please arrive on time for the course.]

EXECUTIVE COURSES AT DHAMMA TAPOVANA

The following ten-day courses have been arranged in Dhamma Tapovana, Igatpuri for high-ranking government officials and business executives.

- 7 to 18 October 2003: (English only)
- 20 to 31 October 2003: (in Mandarin for Chinese only)
Coordinator: George Hsiao, Taiwan.
Email: genor.hsiao@msa.hinet.net

- 8 to 19 November 2003: (Hindi/English)
- 23 November to 4 December 2003: (Hindi/English)
- 7 to 18 December 2003. (Hindi/English)
- 28-12 to 8-1-2004 (English only)

Mainly for executives from the West.

Other than the Mandarin course, registration for all the executive courses will be done at: Dhamma Giri, Igatpuri 422 403. Tel. [91] (02553) 244076; Fax: (02553) 244176; Email: info@giri.dhamma.org

SUBSCRIPTION TO ENGLISH/HINDI MONTHLY NEWSLETTER: ANNUAL: RS 30 (U.S. \$10 OUTSIDE INDIA); LIFE SUBSCRIPTION: RS 500 (U.S. \$100 OUTSIDE INDIA) BY BANK DRAFT, PAYABLE AT IGATPURI IN FAVOUR OF VRI.

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