

Vipassana Newsletter

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

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WORDS OF DHAMMA

*Kodhaṃ jabe vip̄pajāheyya mānaṃ,
saṃyojanaṃ sabbamatikkameyya;
taṃ nāmarūpasmimasajjamaṇaṃ,
akiñcanaṃ nānupatanti dukkhaṃ.*

*One should give up anger,
renounce pride, and overcome all fetters;
Suffering never befalls one,
who clings not to mind and body and is detached.*

—Dhammapada 221

The Essence of the Buddha's Teaching

S. N. Goenka

(The following is an extract from 'Glimpses of the Buddha's Life,' published by Vipassana Research Institute.)

There are many misconceptions about the Buddha and his teachings in India. It is essential to remove them and to reveal the truth, especially to Vipassana meditators. Otherwise, they will remain oblivious of the facts and will remain confused. This "Glimpses of the Buddha's Life" exhibition will certainly dispel some misconceptions, if not all.

Why did Prince Siddhattha renounce royal comforts, his beautiful young wife and newborn baby and choose the difficult life of an ascetic? He had no quarrel with his family members. He had loving relations with all of them. Therefore, when he discovered the universal path of liberation from suffering, he shared this knowledge with his family and relatives in addition to innumerable suffering people of the world.

The sole purpose of his search was to discover the true cause of suffering and the right means for its eradication. He spent six years of his life making strenuous effort to discover the truth and he finally found the real solution to this problem. Pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu—the truth that he had never heard before manifested itself.

This truth was not prevalent in society nor was it being practised in the spiritual field. How then could he have heard of it? From whom could he have heard of it? Let us take a look at what was prevalent as the truth in the spiritual traditions in India during the Buddha's time. Let us also look at the truth discovered by him which, far from being popular, was not even known?

In almost all traditions in those days, the belief was that the six sense doors (eyes, nose, ear, tongue, body and mind) constantly come in contact with their respective sense objects (form, odour, sound, taste, touch and thoughts). Because of this contact, one constantly generates

taṇhā—craving to preserve and increase what is pleasant and aversion to get rid of what is unpleasant.

Whenever craving or aversion arises due to contact, suffering arises. Craving or aversion comes with suffering. Thus, the commonly held belief was that when the sense doors come in contact with sense objects, one should not generate *taṇhā*—craving or aversion. On coming in contact with sense objects, one should not react with craving or aversion.

The Buddha understood that this is only the apparent truth and not the ultimate truth. It is partial truth, not the complete truth. Partial truth can only yield partial benefit, not full benefit.

When the six sense doors, that is, the six sense organs come in contact with their respective objects (*saḷāyatana paccayā phasso*) a sensation arises in the body (*phassa paccayā vedanā*) and when the sensation is experienced, craving (*taṇhā*) arises (*vedanā paccayā taṇhā*).

Clearly, if we are not aware of *phassa paccayā vedanā*—the sensations that arise as a result of contact—we are ignoring the deep root and getting entangled in the superficial branches.

We should be aware of the bodily sensation that arises as a result of contact and should remain equanimous towards it. When we do so, we start getting liberated from craving and aversion at the root level of the mind. Whatever the outward object (causing craving or aversion), it seems that when we come in contact with this object, we perceive it as desirable and generate craving towards it or perceive it as undesirable and generate aversion towards it. However, this is not the actual truth. It is only apparent truth. The key to true freedom from craving and aversion is to know the actual truth and to maintain equanimity while remaining aware of it. We must gain freedom from *vedanā paccayā taṇhā*. This is the

auspicious path of attaining liberation from craving in reality. This is the beneficial teaching of Vipassana. This is the knowledge that leads to release from all suffering.

An example: a certain person who joined a Vipassana retreat was afraid of the sound of the barking of dogs. He was an educated young man. At the intellectual level he understood quite well that his was a secure lodging. He was sleeping in a closed room. A dog was barking somewhere in the neighbourhood. It could not even come near him. Then why should he be afraid? Yet, this understanding is only intellectual. The fact is that he would be afraid as soon as he heard the sound of a dog barking. Who could convince him at the level of reality and how? Fortunately, he joined a Vipassana course. He started experiencing the sensations encountered during the course. By practice he learnt to remain equanimous towards bodily sensations. His fear of a dog's barking automatically disappeared. The fear was contained in the bodily sensations. Once he learnt to be equanimous towards those sensations, his fear disappeared.

Several people who come to learn Vipassana have addictions such as addiction to alcohol, heroin, gambling, sexual misconduct etc. Because of their attachment, they are unable to come out of their addictions even if they wish to. Actually, the addiction is not to any substance but to the bodily sensation that comes from the use of that substance. Because they do not know the real cause of their suffering, they remain a slave to their addictions and commit wrong actions, thereby producing suffering for themselves, now and in the future.

If one commits wrong actions of body and speech, a storm of defilements will arise in the mind and make him agitated. In order to get release from this, the Buddha discovered the technique of Vipassana. To clarify it, he discovered and explained certain laws of nature.

The first one, mentioned above, is that as soon as any of the sense organs come in contact with their respective objects, some sensation manifests itself in the body. Another fact is that we react with craving or aversion towards this very sensation. It is only by discovering this previously unknown truth that the inner eye, the eye of knowledge, the eye of wisdom arose in him and he attained knowledge, attained enlightenment; the light manifested itself. The Bodhisatta became a sammāsambuddha.

Two thousand and six hundred years ago, without the aid of modern scientific devices, solely by means of his mental power, this super-scientist of the spiritual world realized the truth that there is no solidity in our apparently gross body and in the entire material world. This solidity is only the apparent truth, the manifest truth. It appears to be so. The ultimate truth is that everything in the material world is made up of innumerable tiny little sub-atomic particles, which are so minute that they cannot be seen with the naked eye. He termed them kalāpa. Even this kalāpa is not permanent, not solid. Every moment it undergoes combustion-oscillation.

Sabbo pajjalito loko, sabbo loko pakampito.
(Samyuttanikāyo, 1.168, Upacālāsuttam)

They keep arising and passing away in the wavelets of these oscillations—uppādavayadhammino.

Arising and passing away, this impermanence is their true nature, their dhamma. The mind and mental concomitants also have the same impermanent nature.

Within the time that it takes to blink, they arise and pass away many trillions of times. This creates an illusion that they are constant and permanent.

Sensations are produced in the body even because of this rapid activity of arising and passing away in the body and mind.

Another truth of nature manifests itself—

Vedanāsamōsarānā sabbe dhammā.

The mental concomitants (cetasikas) that the mind contains are called 'dhamma'. The law of nature is that whatever mental concomitants arise in the mind, they start flowing in the body in the form of a sensation.

Sensations are also produced by the interaction of body and mind, due to posture, environment and food.

Mind

Besides the above causes for the arising of sensations, different sensations arise at different times due to the four mental aggregates: viññāna (consciousness that cognizes), saññā (perception that recognizes and evaluates), vedanā (the sensation), saṅkhāra (conditioning in response to the sensation).

Body

Besides the mind, there are four elements of the body: earth, fire, water and air. Different sensations associated with these keep arising time and again.

Among these various types of sensations, two types of sensations are generally predominant—pleasant or unpleasant. They are instantly experienced by the deepest level of the subconscious mind. If the sensation is perceived as pleasant, a reaction of craving occurs and if it is perceived as unpleasant, there is a reaction of aversion. These reactions are our saṅkhāras. Many of these saṅkhāras (kammās) tend to grow stronger at the depth of the mind.

Some of these saṅkhāras are very feeble, like a line drawn on water; as one is drawing the line, it fades away. Some of these are like lines drawn on sand; they fade away in a short while. But some lines are like those drawn on hard rock with a chisel and hammer; they don't fade away for years.

Among these saṅkhāras some are unwholesome and some are wholesome. Unwholesome saṅkhāras lead us to the lower worlds and wholesome saṅkhāras lead us to higher, divine worlds. Saṅkhāras that are not very deep-rooted remain on the surface level of the mind. The saṅkhāras that have strong and deep roots are connected with the innermost mind.

Due to lack of understanding, we frequently repeat certain feeble, unwholesome saṅkhāras and make them intense and deep. Consequently, we make our present and future more miserable.

These discoveries of the Buddha were not intended to merely satisfy intellectual curiosity. Rather, his purpose was to find the right means of eradicating suffering with

the help of these truths. So he discovered the technique of Vipassana which gives results here and now. One learns how not to react towards sensations and to remain equanimous. From then on to this day, it has liberated innumerable people from suffering. f

Goenkaji's Discourses on Television

Aastha: Daily, 9:45 am

Zee: Urja, Daily, 4:30 am

Hungama and Bindass: Daily, 4.30 to 6.00 am

USA: Aastha 6 pm EST (Monday to Friday) on Worlddirect platform of Directv on channel no. 2005.

(Please confirm exact timings.)

Meditation for hearing and speech impaired children

Since the last two years, Anapana courses have been held in Myanmar and India for children with impaired hearing and speech.

These courses are being conducted regularly at Dhamma Punna, Pune since March 2007. The fifteenth course was held recently on 18 January 2009. 47 students, boys and girls, in the age group of 8-18 years participated in the course. The children's course teacher conducting the course is a teacher in their school. She conducts the course using sign language and posters. The children have been attending these courses with enthusiasm—some having sat more than ten courses.

For more details about these courses, contact Dr. Nirmala Ganla, Email: nganla@gmail.com.

Vipassana Centre in Northern California

The Northern California Vipassana Association has purchased a 17-acre former resort in Lake County and has received a use permit to develop the property into a permanent meditation center.

Dhamma Manda (Essence of Dhamma) is approximately two hours from the Bay Area, one hour from Santa Rosa and less than two hours from Sacramento. The wooded property has a number of rustic buildings. Plans have been completed for upgrading these and building a new commercial kitchen and a meditation hall.

Most of the construction will take place in spring 2009. The plan is to begin offering ten-day courses for 40 to 50 students by summer. For more details, email info@manda.dhamma.org

Vipassana Websites

Vipassana introduction: www.dhamma.org

Course schedules of Vipassana centres worldwide, application form for ten-day courses, etc.

Dhamma Giri: www.vri.dhamma.org

Indian Vipassana centres and schedule of courses, VRI Newsletters, research papers, publications, etc.

Pali Tipitaka Website: www.tipitaka.org

The Chattha Saṅgāyana Tipitaka in Roman, Devanagari, Cyrillic, Gujarati, Kannada, Malayalam, Bengali, Telugu, Tamil, Myanmar, and Sinhala scripts.

Prison Courses Website: www.prison.dhamma.org

Information about Vipassana courses in prisons.

Global Vipassana Pagoda: www.globalpagoda.org

Updated information including facility for online donation.

Pilgrimage to the Buddha Sacred Sites

IRCTC, the tourism arm of Indian Railways, has started running a fully air-conditioned special train named the Mahaparinirvana Express, touring the Buddha Sacred Sites:

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Children's Courses in Mumbai

To serve children's courses in Mumbai, call 98200-22990.

Date	Venue	Age	Registration
1-2	South Mumbai	9-16 yrs	27 & 28-1

Lumbini, Bodhgaya, Sarnath and Kushinagar. Full details: www.railtourismindia.com/buddha

This is an excellent opportunity for a Vipassana meditator to go on this pilgrimage comfortably without the bother and hassle of organising multiple ticketing, local transport at different destinations and hotel stays.

The Global Vipassana Foundation (GVF) has negotiated a special discount of 21% with IRCTC for the benefit of Vipassana meditators, and IRCTC & GVF has additionally agreed to arrange two group meditation sessions for the Vipassana meditators, subject to the number of such meditators being not less than ten on a given train. The first session will be under the Bodhi tree in the Mahabodhi Temple at Bodh Gaya and the second at Kushinagar. The group sittings will be organised after visiting hours so as to provide a quiet environment for group meditation. This would be subject to no other engagement happening on the particular day in the temple premises.

The circuit of the Mahaparinirvana Express starts and ends at Delhi. The forthcoming schedule and tariff appear below:

Schedule: start and end at Delhi

	Starting date	Ending date
2009 Feb	7 & 21	14 & 28
2009 Mar	7 & 21	14 & 28

Tariff: full tour of eight days.

Full fare (infants free, children 5-12 yrs 50%)

Class	Rack Rate		21% Discounted Rate (rounded)	
	Rs	USD	Rs	USD
First	45150	1050	35670	830
2 Tier	37625	875	29730	692
3 Tier	28595	665	22590	525

For more information, please visit www.railtourismindia.com/buddha or contact Mr. Arun Srivastava, Dy. General Manager, Tourism, IRCTC, Ground Floor, STC Building, 1-Tolstoy Marg, New Delhi 110001, India. Tel: (91) 2370-1100, 2370-1101, 97176-40452
Email: arunsrivastava@irctc.com, buddhisttrain@irctc.com
For registration contact Manish Shinde, Mumbai
Tel: [91] 93235-26462, Email: manish@globalpagoda.org

Pali Workshops

Two Pali workshops have been organized at Jaipur for Hindi-speaking Vipassana meditators from India and Nepal from 20 to 28 February 2009 and 23 to 31 May 2009.

Venue: Kothari Farms (Marugandha), Bhankrota-Jaisinghpura Road, 2 kms. off Jaipur-Ajmer Express Highway, Bhankrota, Jaipur.

For registration, contact Ms. Meghana, Mobile: 96028-48896. Email: paliworkshop@yahoo.co.in

Pali Workshop in the US

The nonprofit, educational organization Pariyatti is pleased to announce a Pali Workshop from 14 April to 15 May, 2010 near Seattle, WA, USA.

Mr. and Mrs. S.N. Tandon of Delhi, India, have accepted an invitation to facilitate and guide this workshop.

Details—including costs, deposit information, workshop format and syllabus, application process, etc.—will be announced as they are confirmed. To receive announcements and further information, interested students may subscribe to the Pali Workshop email list by sending an email to: pali-workshop-info-subscribe@pariyatti.org.

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22-2	Ghatkopar	9-16 yrs	19 & 20-2
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Course Timings: 8:30 am to 2:30 pm. Registration: 11 am to 1 pm

Course Venues: **Andheri:** Dada Saheb Gaikwad Sansthan, Babasabeb Ambedkar Marg, RTO Corner, Four Bungalows,

Andheri (W), Tel:2510-1096, 2516-2505. **Ghatkopar (W):** SNDT School, New Bldg., Cama Lane, Opp. Vidyut Soc. Tel: 2510-1096, 2516-2505. **Goregaon:** Siddharth Municipal Hospital, Opp. Motilal Nagar Post Office, Goregaon (W), Tel 2308-1622. **Matunga:** Amulakh Amirchand High School, Rafi Ahmed Kidwai Rd, New SNDT College, King's Circle, Matunga, Tel: 2510-1096, 2516-2505. **South Mumbai:** Tel: 2308-1622. **Ulhasnagar:** Guru Nanak School, Kurla Camp, Ulhasnagar-4. Tel: (0251) 252-2693. NB Please: *bring cushion, *register on specified phone numbers, *inform in advance if unable to attend after registration, *arrive on time for the course.

Online Vipassana Newsletters and Archives

For online editions of the VRI Newsletter in English, Hindi, Telugu, Tamil, Gujarati and Malayalam, visit: www.vri.dhamma.org/newsletters. Archives of earlier editions are also available at this website.

NEW RESPONSIBILITIES

Senior Assistant Teachers:

1. Mr. Laxmi Prasad Mandlekar, Jabalpur
2. Mr. Claude Chopin, France

NEW APPOINTMENTS

Assistant Teachers:

1. Dr. Arun Ghaiye, Pune
2. Mr. Pritam Lal Pradhan, Nepal
3. Mr. Andrea Mazza, Italy
4. Mr. Jack Holder, USA
5. Ms. Ginger Lighthouse, USA

Children's Course Teachers:

1. Ms. M. Chitra Malinie Gunawardana, Sri Lanka
2. Mrs. Seetha Nandane Hiripitiya, Sri Lanka
3. Mr. Laknath jayawardane, Sri Lanka
4. Mrs. Wajira Wijewardana, Sri Lanka

IN MEMORIAM

Mrs. Sharda Devi Mathuriya, Assistant Teacher of Vipassana from Ajmer, passed away on 22 Nov 2008. Her husband, Mr. Om Prakash Mathuriya, is also an assistant teacher.
May she be happy, peaceful and liberated.

DHAMMA DOHAS

*Hindū ho yā Baudhha ho, Musalima ho yā Jaina;
Jaba jaba mana mailā kare, taba taba ho becaina.
Hindu or Buddhist, Muslim or Jain,
Whenever you defile your mind, you become agitated.*

*Gorā kālā gehuñā, manuja manuja hī hoyā;
Jo jo mana mailā kare, so hī dukhiyā hoyā.
White, black or brown, a man is still a man.
Whoever defiles his mind becomes miserable.*

*With much mettā,
A Vipassana meditator*

*Varṇa raṅga se māṇavī, ūñca nīca nā hoyā;
Kālī gorī gāya kā, dūdha eka sā hoyā.
The color of a man's skin makes him neither high nor low.
Black or white, a cow gives milk all the same.*

*Dharmavanta to hai vabī, śilavanta jo hoyā;
Kāyā vāñī citta ke, śīla na khaṇḍita hoñya.
To practice the Dhamma, one must practice śīla;
Not by body, speech or mind should śīla be broken.*

*With best compliments from
MOTILAL BANARSIDASS*

*41 U.A. Bungalow Road, Jawahar Nagar, Delhi 110 007
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Pune, Tel: 24486190; Bangalore, Tel: 26542591;
Kolkata, Tel: 22824872, Patna, Tel: 2671442; Varanasi, Tel: 2412331.*

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Fax: [91] (02553) 244176
Email: info@giri.dhamma.org
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