

Vipassana Newsletter

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

Vol. 19, No. 8: 5 August 2009

Annual Subscription: Rs 30; Life Subscription: Rs. 500

Published every month by Vipassana Research Institute

Web version: www.vridhamma.org/Newsletter_Home.aspx

WORDS OF DHAMMA

*Yathā naro āpagamotaritvā,
mahodakam salilam sīghasotam;
so vuyhamāno anusotagāmī,
kiṃ so pare sakkhati tārayetum?*

If one going down into a river—
swollen and swiftly flowing—
is carried away by the current,
how can one help others across?

—Sutta Nipāta 2.321

Forty Years of Dhamma Dana

Forty years of Dhamma dana have been completed. I recall a 45-year old man who left his beloved motherland, Myanmar, and came to India, the land of the Enlightened One. My teacher, Sayagyi U Ba Khin, emphasized repeatedly that many centuries ago, India has gifted the invaluable gem of Dhamma to Myanmar. Myanmar is greatly indebted to India. It has preserved this noble teaching in its pristine purity. Unfortunately India has totally lost it. Now Myanmar has to repay this invaluable debt.

Sayagyi U Ba Khin wanted to come to India to revive the Vipassana technique that was lost in this country. However, he was unable to do so. Therefore, in the last week of June, in 1969, he appointed me as a teacher of this ancient tradition and gave me the responsibility of repaying this debt. I was taken aback. Though he had taught me the practice of Vipassana meditation as well as the Buddha's words and trained me to conduct Vipassana courses, I felt I was totally incompetent to fulfil this heavy responsibility.

Seeing my apprehension, Sayagyi exhorted me, "Why are you troubled? You are not going alone; I am accompanying you in the form of Dhamma. Many people with *paramis* have taken birth in India and they will be attracted to you; they will be attracted to Dhamma. Dhamma will work on its own. 2500 years of the Buddha Sasana have been completed. The time has ripened for the debt has to be paid back. Vipassana will be revived in India and this will be accomplished through you. So go without any anxiety."

I left for India two-three days later. However, I still felt anxious. Who would accept me as a Dhamma teacher? My appearance and attire were not that of a conventional spiritual teacher. I did not have saffron robes or long matted hair or fully shaven head or beard and moustache. I was an ordinary Burmese householder, who had brought

the invaluable spiritual teaching from Myanmar. I was opposed to any pretence. I was disinclined to let go of my simple attire of the Burmese *loongyi* and *angyi* (over shirt). Who would accept me as a Dhamma teacher?

I arrived at my family home in Mumbai. None in my family had any inclination towards Vipassana. They were all following a different path that was incompatible with Vipassana. There was no hope of any support from them to organize a Vipassana course. How could the first course be organized? Where could it be organized? Who would organize it? Who would take part in the course? My mind became overwhelmed with disappointment, helplessness and sorrow.

It was the second or the third night in India. While I was sleeping, there was a sudden flash of light. As soon as my eyes opened, I thought, "Who is this 'I' who will organize a course? This is Dhamma's job. Dhamma will take care of itself."

Some friends and acquaintances came to visit me early the next morning. There was a discussion about conducting a Vipassana course. I asked, "Is a suitable place available to conduct a course? Even if it is available, who will organize the course and who will agree to sit for ten days with me?"

On hearing this, one of the visitors, Dayanand Adukia said, "Do not worry. I shall arrange for the venue and I will manage the course". Hearing this, my close friend from Myanmar, Kantilal G. Shah said, "I will take part in the course and will also bring one or two of my friends."

Dhamma started working and the first course was organized. Dayanand Adukia managed the course and his son, Vijay Adukia, joined the course. Kantilal Shah and his friend, B. C. Shah, joined the course. And much to my pleasant surprise, my father and mother agreed to sit the course. A few other relatives also sat the course and the first course was successfully completed with 13 students.

Dayanand Aduka managed the course very well. He and Kantilal Shah will always be remembered in the history of the revival of Vipassana in India.

As soon as the first course was completed, I went to Madras. I had a pleasant surprise there. My elder brother Bal Krishna and all his family members were deeply involved in a tradition opposed to Vipassana. Even then, out of affection for me, he organized many public talks and also organized a course. I felt blessed. Along with other family members, Shyamsundar, brother Chothmal's son, sat the course.

Some more courses were held in a guest-house in Mumbai. Then I went to northern India, where my friend and author, Shri Yashpal Jain, arranged a course at a guest-house in Birla Mandir. Some more courses were organized in Northern India.

The 14th course was held in the Samanvaya Ashram at Bodhgaya in which were many bhikkhus and my old friend Anagarika Munindra Delighted with his first experience of free flow of sensations, he wrote a letter to my teacher who was in Rangoon.

Courses were held at different locations all over northern India and a few Western students took part in every course. I would explain to them separately, giving short discourses and instructions in English. They worked very seriously.

For the twentieth course, some Western students requested me to hold a course for them in English. I did not accept their request. I was teaching two-three Western students in the courses but felt that I did not have the ability to give discourses in English fluently. So I was not willing to conduct an entire course exclusively for foreigners. They complained to my revered teacher at Rangoon. I received strict instructions from him that I should conduct a course for them. He said that Dhamma would take care of the barrier of language. I reluctantly went to Dalhousie to conduct a course. On the night of the first day, I gave a discourse for just 15 minutes, the second day for 30 minutes and from the third day onwards I gave an hour-long discourse, as fluently as the discourses in Hindi. I was surprised. This was due to the strength of Dhamma and the strong mettā of my beloved teacher. The course was completed successfully.

After this course, in addition to Indian householders, bhikkhus and sanyasis, young men and women from abroad started participating in large numbers. I started conducting courses in Hindi and English. The number of Westerners in courses started growing. One among them was Daniel Goleman, who later became consultant to many American businessmen and industrialists. Joseph Goldstein and Sharon Salsburg also took part in some courses and later started teaching Vipassana in America.

The practice of *silā*, *samādhi* and *paññā* started attracting others just as it has attracted me because it did not leave room for intellectual arguments and did not need acceptance of any sectarian belief. This pure scientific teaching started attracting everybody.

A large number of foreigners participated in some courses held at Dalhousie. An elderly Christian priest and two elderly nuns participated in one of these courses. They

were happy that many hippies discontinued LSD and other intoxicants as well as sexual misconduct after practising Vipassana. But they wanted to find out whether I was converting their followers to Buddhism. After directly experiencing the benefits gained from the course, they were delighted. Mother Mary said, "Goenka, you are teaching Christianity in the name of Buddha."

After this course, many Christian priests and nuns started participating in courses. Now, a course is held exclusively for them in Mumbai. More than six thousand priests and nuns have benefited from Vipassana courses so far.

My friend, Shri Yashpal Jain and Vishnu Prabhakar attended one of the courses held at Dalhousie. Both of them were pleased with this teaching. Shri Yashpal Jain told Acaryashri Tulsiji, the principal teacher of Terapanth Sangha, about Vipassana and introduced me to him. Acaryashri Tulsiji was impressed and organized a course in Delhi for Acarya Munishri Nathmalji and other male and female disciples. All of them liked the purity of this teaching. As a result, he organized two courses in *Tulsi Adyatma Needam* of Ladnun, in which many of their male and female disciples participated and took benefit. After Acarya Tulsiji, the young Acarya Mahapragya (Munishri Nathmalji) became the principal teacher of Terapanth Sangha. He had already taken four courses in Vipassana. He made some modifications and started teaching it as *Preksha Dhyana*.

Sthanakvasi Sramansanghiya Chaturth Patdhar Acarya Dr. Shivmuniji and Munishri Amarendravijayji, Munishri Bhuvanchandraji, Munishri Parshwachandraji of Parshwachandragaccha Sangha had participated in many courses. However, there is no report of any of them making changes in the teaching of Vipassana. Along with Upadhyaya Amarmuniji, Sadhvishri Chandanaji, the manager of Virayatan, arranged a course at Rajgir and also at their second branch Naval Virayatan in Pune. Several other munis and sadhvis benefited from Vipassana and encouraged others to practise it.

Nirmalaji, Gandhiji's daughter-in-law organized the 50th Vipassana course at Mahatma Gandhi Ashram, Wardha. Some of Gandhiji's followers participated in it. At the end of the course, I was taken to Vinoba Bhavē's Ashram. He stated that he will accept Vipassana only if it benefits prison inmates. I accepted the challenge. However, due to the government's policy, a course could not be organized in the prison then.

Later, the first prison course was made possible by the efforts of Shri Ram Singhji, the Home Secretary of Rajasthan, who had participated in the 109th course. He relaxed the prison rules so that the courses could be conducted in the Central Jail of Jaipur. The beneficial results achieved in these courses paved the way for Vipassana courses in prisons all over the world. Kiran Bedi arranged several courses in Tihar Jail and a Vipassana centre was established there. Courses are being held in prisons of different countries. The Government of Myanmar has also allowed courses in prisons and centres have also been opened in two prisons there.

In India, in the initial 7-8 years, Vipassana courses were organized in guest-houses, schools, temples, educational institutions, viharas (monasteries), churches, mosques, dargahs, etc. People attended these courses and followed all the course rules in spite of inconvenience. In 1976, Shri Sriram Taparia and Shri Ratilal Mehta organized the construction of Vipassana centres at Igatpuri and Hyderabad. After that, Vipassana centres were started all over the world.

During the first ten years in India, 165 courses were conducted and 16,496 students participated in them. Munis, bhikkhus, sanyasis, priests, nuns; Hindus, Muslims, Jains, Sikhs, Christians, Jews, Parsis; Indians and foreigners; men and women; people of all races, and classes participated in the courses. They participated in courses conducted by an unknown person like me and presented me the wonderful opportunity to give Dhamma dana, the gift of Dhamma. I am grateful to each one of them.

Some of those who participated in the courses learnt the technique partially and started teaching Vipassana after making some changes in it. I recall some who got distanced from me or started practicing some other form of meditation or discontinued practicing Vipassana. I am grateful to all of them because they spared their invaluable ten days to attend the course. Many other students accepted Vipassana in its pure form and started spreading the light of Dhamma in India and abroad. I am deeply grateful to them too.

Till now, 147 Vipassana centres have been opened in India and abroad. Nearly two thousand trained teachers are holding regular courses as well as courses for children in English, Hindi and other languages all over the world. The teaching in my words has been translated into 58 languages and courses are held in all those languages. I am grateful to all these teachers, course organizers and Dhamma servers. Today, nearly 80,000 people are benefitting every year from about 1600 courses held all over India and abroad. The numbers are increasing every year. It is thanks to them that the Global Vipassana Pagoda has come into existence. Shri Subhash Chandra and his family have donated the land and meditators and others have worked together to construct the Pagoda.

The Enlightened One said, "*Sabbadānaṃ dhamma dānaṃ jināti*—the gift of Dhamma exceeds all gifts." (*Dhammapada 354, Taṇhāvaggo*)

I brought this invaluable gem to India. However, if no one had accepted this Dhamma dana from me, if they hadn't spared ten days of their life to learn this technique from me, how could I have earned this supreme merit? Therefore, I am grateful to each and every one of them.

In addition, they proved right this ancient belief: On completion of 2500 years of the Buddha Sasana, the pure Dhamma will return to the India, the land of its origin; the people here will accept it and then it will spread all around the world.

Therefore, I feel indebted towards them and I wish to meet all of them again so that I can voice my deep gratitude to them. I wish that any meditator who knows anyone who has done any Vipassana course with me in the

first ten years (1969 to 1979), invite him or her to the Gratitude Gathering on Sunday, 17 January, 2010 at Global Vipassana Pagoda, Gorai (Borivali), Mumbai. ☺

Cordial Invitation

I extend a cordial invitation to every student who took part in the ten-day Vipassana courses held in India in the first ten years from 1969 to 1979 to participate in the Gratitude Gathering.

In gratitude,
S. N. Goenka

Request to the Gratitude Gathering Participants

Meditators who know anyone who has taken part in a ten-day Vipassana course with Goenkaji in his initial ten years (even if he or she does not practise Vipassana now or has started practicing some other form of meditation or has started teaching Vipassana) are requested to send details of his or her present full name, address, phone number, Email id, date of first course and venue so that they can be invited to the Gratitude Gathering. Please also encourage others to do the same.

All Vipassana teachers, SATs, ATs, CCTs, Dhamma servers, trustees and students are also cordially invited to attend the Gratitude Gathering.

Please inform about your participation in the Gratitude Gathering so that adequate preparation can be made for meals and seating arrangement.

Contact: Ms. Bhavana Gogari or Ms. Namita Bajaj, Vipassana International Centre, Dhamma Giri, Igatpuri 422 403. Mobile: [91] 99678-71644, 98196-15426; Tel: (02553) 244086, 244076 (10 a.m. to 5 p.m.) Email: globalpagoda17jan@gmail.com

Special One-day Course at Global Pagoda

A one-day course is being held on 4 October 2009, Sunday, *Purnima* from 11 am to 4 pm in the main dome of Global Vipassana Pagoda. For registration, contact: Ms. Nisha Shenoy, Mobile [91] 98928-55612, 98928-83945; Tel: (022) 2845-2104, 2845-1182; Email: global.oneday@gmail.com;

Websites: www.globalpagoda.org and www.vridhamma.org.

Note: Students may register or update their mobile phone numbers and Email ids at the above contact address so that they can be informed of future programmes.

Myanmar Guest-house in the Global Pagoda

There is no facility for travellers who come from distant places to visit the Global Vipassana Pagoda to stay overnight.

Therefore, the people of Myanmar have decided to build a guest-house in the Global Vipassana Pagoda. The Foundation Stone of the guest-house will be laid on 1 November 2009 (Sunday).

On this occasion, Goenkaji will give a public talk in the presence of distinguished guests from Myanmar. All meditators are cordially invited to attend with their family and friends.

Global Vipassana Pagoda Beautification Projects

Construction of the Global Vipassana Pagoda is now complete. It took 11 years to build, and apart from the cost of land, about Rs. 800 million (US \$16.8 million) have been spent in the construction of the Pagoda. Many Vipassana meditators from India and around the world have personally contributed to it and gained boundless merits.

The Global Vipassana Pagoda is unique among the historical monuments in the world. It is essential that the Pagoda awesome size should be matched by its elegant beauty. A major portion of beautification projects of the Pagoda are pending. Therefore, all connected with the worldwide Vipassana mission in their individual capacity as well as all Vipassana centres may avail themselves of the opportunity to earn merits by participating in the remaining beautification projects of the Pagoda.

Important remaining projects are:

1. Beautification of the Global Vipassana Pagoda

Much work remains in putting up ornamental designs on the Pagoda, decorating the canopy, canopy pillars, and the verses (*dobas*) on the Pagoda walls. The Parikrama path will be laid with marble (to ease walking barefoot even on hot days). Estimated cost of completion of these projects is Rs. 12.5 million (US \$260,000)

2. Landscaping around the Global Vipassana Pagoda

Landscaping the outer areas of the Pagoda, building parks and roads, laying water lines etc. will require about Rs. 25 million (US \$ 530,000).

3. Painting the Global Vipassana Pagoda in Gold Colour

After the end of the monsoon season, the entire Pagoda will be painted in gold colour at an estimated cost of Rs. 7.5 million (US \$ 160,000).

4. Construction of Small Pagoda on the South Side of the Global Vipassana Pagoda

This small Pagoda will be connected to the *Dhamma Pattana* Vipassana Centre with a cell complex spread over four stories. 108 cells have been planned. The construction of each cell in this air-conditioned Pagoda is estimated at Rs. 150,000 (US \$3,200).

5. Construction of Guest Houses

Guest houses are essential to ensure the comfort of visitors to the Global Vipassana Pagoda. The cost of each twin-sharing room in these guest houses has been estimated at Rs. 600,000 (US \$ 12,600).

Contact: Global Vipassana Foundation, C/o Khimji Kunverji & Co., 52, Bombay Mutual Building, Sir P.M. Road, Mumbai 400 001. Tel: [91] (022) 2266-2550

Mobile website: A special version of the English www.dhamma.org Vipassana Meditation website for mobile devices has just been launched. The new mobile website is especially configured for convenient access via the small screens and limited bandwidth of mobile devices such as smart phones and PDAs. All the information, including schedules of courses, is available on the mobile website. The URL address is www.mobile.dhamma.org. Simply accessing www.dhamma.org on a mobile device goes directly to the mobile website.

Pilgrimage to the Buddha Sacred Sites: IRCTC has started a fully air-conditioned special train, the **Mahaparinirvana Express**, touring the Buddha Sacred Sites (Lumbini, Bodhgaya, Sarnath, Sravasti, Rajgir and Kushinagar). Contact: Izhar Alam, Mobile: 98913-73549 or Arun Srivastava, Tel: 2370-1100/1, 97176-40452. Email: arunsrivastava@irctc.com
Website: www.railtourismindia.com/buddha

Children's Courses in Mumbai

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

Date	Venue	Age	Registration
23-8	Ghatkopar	9-16 years	21st & 23-7
30-8	Goregaon	9-16 years	27 & 28-8
6-9	South Mumbai	9-16 years	4 & 5-9
20-9	Ghatkopar	9-16 years	17 & 18-9
4-10	South Mumbai	9-16 years	2 & 3-10
18-10	Ghatkopar	9-16 years	16 & 17-10
25-10	Goregaon	9-16 years	22 & 23-12
8-11	South Mumbai	9-16 years	6 & 7-11
22-11	Ghatkopar	9-16 years	20 & 21st-11
6-12	South Mumbai	9-16 years	4 & 5-12
20-12	Ghatkopar	9-16 years	17 & 18-12
27-12	Goregaon	9-16 years	23 & 24-12

Course Timings: 8:30 am to 2:30 pm. **Registration:** 11 am to 1 pm
Course Venues: **Ghatkopar(W):** SNTD School, New Bldg., Cama Lane, Opp. Vidyut Soc. Tel: 2510-1096, 2516-2505. **Goregaon(W):** Siddharth Municipal Hospital, Opp. Motilal Nagar Post Office. Tel: 2308-1622. **South Mumbai:** Tel: 2308-1622. NB Please: *bring cushion, *register on specified phone numbers, *inform in advance if unable to attend after registration, *arrive on time for the course.

Goenkaji's Discourses on Television

Aastha: Daily, 9:40 am **Zee:** *Urja*, Daily, 4:30 am
Hungama and Bindass: Daily, 4.30 to 6.00 am

USA: **Aastha** 6 pm EST (Mon to Fri) on Worlddirect platform of Directv on channel no. 2005. (Please confirm exact timings.)

NEW RESPONSIBILITIES

Senior Assistant Teachers:

Mr. John & Mrs. Carolyn Leach

NEW APPOINTMENTS

Assistant Teachers:

1. Mrs. K. Dhana Durga, *Hyderabad*
2. Mrs. Vina Ranawala, *Gandhidham*
3. Mrs. Sharda Jain, *Bangalore*
4. U Ko Ko, *Myanmar*
5. U Than Htay, *Myanmar*
6. U Ba Than, *Myanmar*
7. Mr. Lin Ying-Mao, *Taiwan*
8. Mr. Sergio Borsa, *Switzerland*
9. Mr. Amy Shanker, *USA*

Children's Course Teachers:

1. Mr. N. R. Madhukar, *A.P.*
2. Mr. Lingamurthy Palasu, *A.P.*
3. Mrs. Hoy-Yang Pang, *Malaysia*
4. Mr. Chin-Hing Lee, *Malaysia*
5. Mr. Bruno Bordessoules, *Spain*
6. Ms. Dorothy Robson, *Canada*
7. Mr. Sean Smith, *Canada*
8. Mr. Rivers Cuomo, *USA*
9. Mr. Josh Freeman, *USA*
10. Dr. Adil Irani, *USA*

Online Vipassana Newsletters and Archives

Vipassana Newsletter is available in several Indian languages. For archives of the VRI Newsletter in English, Hindi, Telugu, Tamil, Gujarati and Malayalam, visit: www.vridhamma.org/Newsletter_Home.aspx

DHAMMA DOHAS

*Vāṇī to vaśa meṇ bhalī, vaśa meṇ bhalā śarīra;
Para jo mana vaśa meṇ kare, vahī śūra vaha vīra.*

Good to have mastery of speech,
good to have physical mastery,
but one who is master of his mind
is a warrior of real courage.

*Mana hī durajana, mana sujana, mana bairī, mana mīta;
Mana sudhare saba sudhari haiṇ, kara mana parama
punīta.*

The mind can be wicked, the mind can be gentle,
the mind can be a foe or friend.
If the mind is transformed, all is transformed,
so make your mind truly pure.

*With much mettā,
A Vipassana meditator*

*Dharma na mandira meṇ mile, Dharma na hāta bikāya;
Dharma na granthoṇ meṇ mile, jo dhāre so pāya.
Dhamma is not found in temples, or sold in the bazaar.
Dhamma is not found in books; whoever applies it attains it.*

*Apanā rakṣita Dharama hī, āpanā rakṣaka hoyā;
Dhāraṇa kara leṇ Dharama ko, Dharama sahāyaka hoyā.
Only if you guard the Dhamma, it will be your guard.
If you practice Dhamma, the Dhamma is your helper.*

*With best compliments from
MOTILAL BANARSIDASS*

41 U.A. Bungalow Road, Jawahar Nagar, Delhi 110 007
Mumbai, Tel: 23513526; Chennai, Tel: 24982315; Pune, Tel: 2448-
6190; Bangalore, Tel: 26542591; Kolkata, Tel: 22824872,
Patna, Tel: 2671442; Varanasi, Tel: 2412331

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

Vipassana Research Institute

Dhamma Giri, Igatpuri-422 403,
Dist. Nashik, Maharashtra, India.
Tel: [91] (02553) 244076, 244086;
Fax: [91] (02553) 244176
Email: info@giri.dhamma.org
Website: www.vridhamma.org

