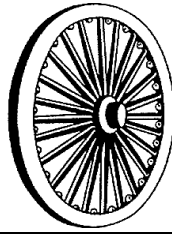


Vipassana

In the tradition of Sayagyi U Ba Khin, as



Newsletter

taught by S. N. Goenka

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WORDS OF DHAMMA

*Taṃ puttapasusammattaṃ
byāsattamanasaṃ naraṃ
suttaṃ gāmaṃ mahoghova
maccu ādāya gacchati.*

One attached to children and herds,
death seizes and carries away;
just as a slumbering village
is swept away by a great flood.

—Dhammapada 287

Meditation for Children

(The following article was first published in the International Vipassana Newsletter dated April 2011)

What is the right age to start meditating?

It's a question that Goenkaji has often been asked, and his answer is usually the same: "Before birth! Then when the child is born, it comes out a Dhamma baby."

Not all of us have been fortunate enough to have such an early exposure to the Dhamma, or to give our children such an early start. But more than ever, there are opportunities for children to learn the basics of meditation. And the results are often startling.

A challenge from a disciple of Gandhi

As long ago as the early 1970s, Goenkaji experimented with teaching meditation to children. Shortly after he left Myanmar, he met with Vinoba Bhave, a leading disciple of Mahatma Gandhi, who was revered throughout India. Goenkaji explained what he was doing. Vinoba Bhave was impressed but he said, "I will believe that this is worthwhile only if you can show that it works with hardened criminals and undisciplined schoolchildren."

Goenkaji gladly accepted the challenge. He soon had the opportunity to show that Vipassana works. The first prison courses were organized in Rajasthan and were very successful. Equally positive were the results of Goenkaji's efforts to teach groups of children.

Despite that, more than a decade passed until the launch of a formal meditation program for children. The first course took place in 1986 in a school located in the Mumbai suburb of Juhu. It was within walking distance of the Goenka family home, and several of Goenkaji's grandchildren participated. Every day Goenkaji would go over to the school to sit with the children, tell stories and explain about the practice of Anapana.

That first course was followed by many more, in India and around the world. Meditators enthusiastically stepped forward to serve. The format kept evolving, as it continues to do; but the response from participants, parents and teachers has consistently been positive.

How a course works

Today separate courses welcome children aged 8 to 12 and teens aged 13 to 18. Often the program starts in the

morning and ends in the evening, but there are also two- and three-day courses.

Conducting the course is a children's course teacher, who has undergone special training at a workshop. Along with the teacher are group leaders, each working closely with a small number of children.

Short meditation periods alternate with supervised play and activities, such as drawing and discussion. The objective is to give the participants an enjoyable experience, help them feel comfortable in a meditation environment and introduce them to the basics of Anapana.

Often the course site is a Vipassana meditation center but sometimes it is a rented facility. And sometimes courses are held in schools as a recognized part of the curriculum.

How the experience affects participants

Parents report that after learning Anapana, their children cope better with problems, behave better, act less aggressive and watch less television. Children say that they use Anapana before school exams and in stressful situations. One boy had resented the time spent by his mother at meditation courses; after he learned Anapana, the resentment gave way to respect and closeness.

One schoolteacher received a surprise when she told a rambunctious 6-year-old in her class to sit in the corner and "meditate." She was using the term loosely to mean calm down. But in fact the boy went and sat cross-legged on the floor, with eyes closed. The baffled teacher asked what he was doing. He replied, "I'm observing my respiration." After school she checked with the boy's parents, who told her about Anapana courses.

Fifteen years ago, a 13-year-old boy from France attended a number of children's courses. After one course he wrote, "Meditation is a special moment that a person spends in quietness far away from noise, far from everything! Particularly this tranquility, which we find so rarely in life. Life is a river that we purify so little except during meditation. It is sometimes peaceful, sometimes agitated, sometimes clouded, sometimes dark. The mind is always overloaded with all sorts of thoughts. Meditation is an excellent way of taming the wandering mind. It is also a remedy for anger and melancholy."

That boy is now an adult, and he and his wife are both serious Vipassana meditators. He hopes that his two children will attend courses when they are a little older, as first steps along the path that he has chosen for himself.

What's happening around the world

In the last two decades, there have been courses for children on six continents. Every year some 60,000 children participate.

In North America there were 30 children's or teens' courses held in 2009, more than half of them in non-center locations. There are also frequent courses in Europe, Australia, New Zealand and Southeast Asia.

But India is where the most courses are held, and where the number of participants is largest. Particularly notable are the courses held in schools or with their involvement.

Anapana in a school setting

During a six-month period in 2007, more than 120 courses were held in 48 Mumbai schools with six different languages of instruction (English, Marathi, Hindi, Telugu, Kannada and Urdu). Of the 9,000 participants, over 8,000 children were 15-year-olds scheduled to write board exams in April 2008. One aim of the program was to see the impact of Anapana practice on the students' exam results. It turned out that the percentage of students who passed the board exams was higher than it had been in many years.

The meditation program was suspended in 2008 and 2009, but it resumed on a smaller scale in 2010. This time the courses were centralized in a few larger schools, to which the students were bused. Over a three-month period, approximately 2,900 children attended a total of 33 courses.

The experiment taught several important lessons: First, administrators and schoolteachers need to be committed to supporting an Anapana program in schools. Detailed planning is important to cover all aspects of a course. The schools must give their students time to continue practicing daily after an Anapana course. And on an ongoing basis, it is vital to develop Dhamma workers to serve on such courses.

Other countries that have held courses involving schools include Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Myanmar, Australia, Germany and Britain.

Regular daily practice is the key to long-term benefits. Schools that have tried just five to 10 minutes of Anapana per day have had impressive results. Studies of the participants found significant increases in self-discipline, honesty, cooperation, attentiveness, cleanliness and concentration. At the same time there were decreases in irritability, quarreling, use of abusive language and feelings of inferiority.

Application to special groups

India has also experimented with courses for autistic children, homeless children, orphans, children with hearing and speech impairments, and children with physical and mental disabilities. In Pune, for example, a home for destitute children has offered Anapana courses for the last 10 years to its 400-plus residents. Some children have gone on to learn Vipassana in longer courses. Daily meditation has immensely improved their self-confidence. Again in Pune, the local Vipassana center has hosted repeated courses for children with hearing and speech impairments. (See "Anapana for children with hearing and speech disabilities" below.)

In Myanmar, there have been courses for children with visual or hearing impairments, children affected by leprosy, and juvenile offenders in various institutions. In the aftermath of Cyclone Nargis in May 2008, old students

organized a visit to southern Myanmar to offer physical assistance as well as Anapana courses; about 1,500 children participated within a few weeks.

A technique for today

Children today are growing up in a fractured and rapidly changing world. They need help to meet the challenges facing them and to develop their full potential. Anapana courses can help them find a way to live peacefully and productively, and to make the society in which we live more peaceful. In the words of Goenkaji, "They should grow up to be ideal human beings. That is our only aim."

For more information about Anapana courses for children, go to: www.children.dhamma.org

What children say about meditation

1. "It's funny having a head that moves and not knowing where it's going."
2. "Most people think that meditation is really easy, as you sit on the floor doing nothing. But that's where they're wrong. It's one of the hardest things to do."
3. "I wish my older sister could have come."
4. "I think it really benefits me. I don't fight with my brother any more."
5. "In my life I feel more peaceful and my parents have commented on how my attitude has changed."
6. "If you find it hard to sleep, this will help you."
7. "My mind is like a video, thoughts just playing on and on. Meditating is like pressing the pause button."
8. "I come to courses because meditation can really help you in your life and it is fun. It can help you control your temper and really help you with mostly everything! When I get angry it helps me control what I do, and not hurt anyone or do anything rash."

Anapana for children with hearing and speech disabilities

For 15 years, Sangeeta Shinde had taught in a school for children with hearing disabilities, in the Indian city of Pune. When she was appointed a children's course teacher in 2005, she felt confident that she could explain Anapana to the children she worked with daily. After all, she had plenty of teaching experience and she knew sign language.

But there was a problem she hadn't thought about: Suppose you have a roomful of children meditating with eyes closed. How do you get them to open their eyes at the end of a session if they cannot hear you?

In a flash Sangeeta saw the solution to the problem: Simply turn on the overhead fans. The children would automatically open their eyes to see what was happening, and then she could give them new instructions.

This is an example of the practical problems that arise when teaching meditation to hearing-impaired children. And it is also an example of the simple, creative solutions found by Sangeeta and others like her in India.

Some 27 participants, mostly in their upper teens, joined the first course in February 2006 at the local center, Dhamma Punna. It was a one-day session that helped the students get oriented and try out Anapana in a couple of sessions. Later courses have expanded on this format. Participants have more time to practice Anapana. They also interact in small groups and learn metta. They watch videotapes of Goenkaji. In some courses the teacher displayed poster-boards with a translation into the local language, Marathi. More recent experiments have involved the use of PowerPoint slides to note important points, while an interpreter provides a complete version in sign language. Efforts are now under way to produce a CD explaining Anapana in sign language.

From early 2005 to December 2010, Dhamma Punna offered 19 courses for students with hearing and speech impairments. The courses continue to evolve. But they have proved that the reverberations of Dhamma can reach children without the physical ability to hear. And the children have shown that they are as receptive as anyone to the Dhamma.

For a short video about the courses, go to: www.children.dhamma.org/en/teachers/courses-special-needs.shtml#Hearing

Myanmar has also experimented with courses for children who have hearing and sight disabilities. The results have been impressive. Again, see the children's course website.

New film on Anapana courses for children

A new short film has just appeared on Anapana meditation courses for children. Seeds of Awareness documents modern children's experiences with Anapana, the course process and its impact. Participants, parents and teachers talk about how Anapana helps in dealing with the pressures of school, family and everyday life. In simple language, they speak about the challenges of Anapana and the benefits: calmness, improved concentration and compassion. The idea for the film emerged in 2008. The aim was to show the relevance of Anapana to young audiences in North America. Meditators came forward with various professional skills to work on different aspects of the film. Other old students donated time, travel miles, talent and effort. Filming took place at three meditation centers as well as participants' homes in the United States and Canada. The result is a moving account of how an ancient meditation technique can work today for children and people of any age.

Seeds of Awareness is available for free download on the Internet. It may also be purchased on DVD. Requests for translation into Spanish, Russian and Khmer have already come in.

To view Seeds of Awareness, click: www.children.dhamma.org/en/videos/seeds.shtml

To purchase the DVD, visit the Pariyatti Bookstore at www.pariyatti.org/Bookstore

Anapana courses from a participant's viewpoint

by Dr. Nwei Lei Ko Ko

I was fortunate to have the opportunity to learn Dhamma at the age of 8 directly from Goenkaji, when he gave Anapana instructions to children at Dhamma Joti in Yangon, Myanmar. He spoke with us in our language, and we were happy to learn from him.

I attended almost all the children's Anapana courses held at Dhamma Joti to the age of 16. More recently, I have started sitting 10-day Vipassana courses.

Anapana has helped me to concentrate on my studies and my work. I am now 23 years old and have qualified as a physician. The medical profession is very hard work but I like to help sick people.

I am very thankful to Goenkaji for giving me the seed of Anapana when I was a child. Regular practice is the way to water this seed so that it will grow into a tree rich in Dhamma fruits. With this art of living, I am convinced that I will be able to lead a worthy life, walking step by step along the Noble Path to liberation from all suffering.

Vipassana In Tripura

The second ten-day Vipassana course was held from 23 April to 3 May 2011 at Ambedkar Adarsh Uchha Vidyalaya at Gokulnagar nearby Agartala. The first Vipassana course in Tripura was held in May last year at the same venue.

One-Day Course at Global Vipassana Pagoda

A mega one-day Vipassana course will be conducted at the Global Vipassana Pagoda in presence of Goenkaji on Guru Purnima. Though Guru Purnima is on Friday, 15 July, the course will be held on Sunday, 17 July 2011 so that maximum meditators can attend the course.

Registration for the course is compulsory.

Contact for registration:

Mobile: 98928-55692, 98928-55945;

Tel: (022) 2845-1170, 3374-7543, 3374-7544

Email registration: oneday@globalpagoda.org

Online registration: www.vridhamma.org

Teenagers' Course For Visually Challenged Girls

Dhamma Sarita, Vipassana center at Khadavli near Mumbai, successfully conducted a 7-day teenagers' course with 23 visually challenged girls as well as another 21 teenager girls. This course was first of its kind in Dhamma Sarita and nearby Vipassana centres.

Diploma in Vipassana, University of Mumbai

Course: One-Year Diploma: Teaching of the Buddha, Vipassana Theory and Practice (2011–2012) (Joint collaboration of VRI, Igatpuri and Department of Philosophy, University of Mumbai)

Syllabus: Introduction to Pali, Pali literature, related art and architecture, life and teaching of the Buddha, principles and technique of Vipassana, practical application of Vipassana in health, education, social development, etc. and other topics.

Medium of Instruction: English.

Venue: Philosophy Dept, Jnaneshwar Bhavan, Mumbai University, Vidya Nagari Campus, Kalina, Santacruz (E), Mumbai 400 098

Application Forms: available from 20 June to 10 July 2011 at Philosophy Dept (11.00 am to 2 pm, Monday to Friday).

Course Duration: 16 July 2011 to 31 March 2012

Timings: Every Saturday, (2:30 to 6:30 pm)

Eligibility: Old SSC or New HSC (12th Std.).

Requirement: Only those who can do a ten-day Vipassana course during Diwali vacation are eligible to appear in the exam.

Contact: 1. Dr. Sharda Sanghvi – 92234-62805; 2. Shashikant Sanghvi – 92244-53182; 3. Mrs. Baljit Lamba – 09321950067 / 26237150; 4. Dept. of Philosophy (022) 2652-7337.

Dhamma Service at Global Vipassana Pagoda

The Vipassana Global Pagoda is implementing various infrastructure and beautification projects and requires the service of committed Vipassana meditators:

Fitters – ITI Fitter with 10 to 15 years of experience in civil construction equipment maintenance, fabrication and other assembly work.

Plumbing & AC Mechanic – ITI Plumber with 10 to 15 years experience in large, multipurpose complexes and in repairing servicing & installing AC units.

Benefits - Opportunity to contribute to this unique project, regular meditation practice, right livelihood, good remuneration package, food for all, and accommodation for deserving candidates.

Contact: General Manager, GVF, Global Vipassana Pagoda, Next to Esselworld, Gorai, Borivali (W) Mumbai 400 091. Tel: (022) 3374-7501, 2845-1204.

Email: hr@globalpagoda.org

Website: www.globalpagoda.org

Children's Meditation Courses in Mumbai

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: Ghatkopar: SNTD School, New Building, Cama Lane, Ghatkopar West , Opp Vidyut Society, Mumbai 400086. Tel: 25011096, 25162505. **Goregaon:** Siddharth Hospital, Goregaon (W). Registration will be done on specified dates only. Tel: 2624-2025 (or sms to 98690-23884).

Date	Course site	Age (years)	Registration
22-5	Goregaon	9-16	19 & 20-5
19-6	Residential course (boys and girls)	10-16	9 to 15-5
19-6	Ghatkopar	10-16	16 & 17-6

Courses are also held regularly at the following areas of Mumbai.

Venue	Day	Registration Nos.
Sanpada	First Sundays	98694-05600
Dombivili	First Sundays	98202-71594
Chembur	Fourth Sundays	98690-16885
Airoli	Fourth Sundays	98923-29410

Please call on the respective numbers two days in advance to confirm the course and for registration.

[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.]

NEW RESPONSIBILITIES

Ācaryas:

1. Mr. Jitendrakumar Thakkar, *Banaskantha Spread of Dhamma*

Senior Assistant Teachers:

1. Dr. Ms. Indumati Modha, *Jamnagar*
2. Mrs. Manjula Joshi, *Ahmedabad*
3. Mr. Eric Lataste, *France*
4. Mr. Virak Chan, *France*
5. & 6. Mr. Kostas Lempidakis & Mrs. Claudia Hackfort, *Greece*
7. Mr. Sigitas Baltramaitis, *Lithuania*
8. Ms. Clara Jiménez Xiberta, *Spain*
9. Mrs. Snehlata Jain, *UK*

NEW APPOINTMENTS

Assistant Teachers:

Ms. Prem Garg, *Panchkula*

Children's Course Teachers:

1. Mrs. Jogeshwari Chhaya, *Kutch*
2. Mr. Anil Jariwala, *Surat*
3. Mr. Mahendrakumar Maisuria, *Surat*
4. Mrs. Urvashi Makwana, *Surat*
5. Mrs. Geeta Pal, *Haryana*
6. Mrs. Jyotiben Parikh, *Surat*
7. Mr. Kiritkumar Parmar, *Surat*
8. Mr. Giridharbhai Patel, *Surat*
9. Mrs. Pinul Shah, *Surat*
10. Mr. Rakesh Trivedi, *Surat*
11. Mrs. Ragini Jani, *Modasa*
12. Mrs. Nipapone Jangkratoke, *Thailand*
13. Mr. Chaisri Promchuey, *Thailand*
14. Mr. Boris Paul, *Germany*

DHAMMA DOHAS

*Jaba jaba antara jagata meṅ, jāge citta vikāra;
maiṅ bhī vyākula hoṅ uthūṅ, vikala karūṅ saṃsāra.*
Whenever in the inner world, mental defilements arise,
I become agitated and make the outer world agitated.

*Jo cāhe maṅgala sadhe, mukti dukkhoṅ se hoyā;
vaśa meṅ kara le citta ko, citta ke vaśa mata hoye.*
If you wish to gain happiness and freedom from suffering,
gain mastery over your mind; do not allow it to enslave you.

*With much mettā,
A Vipassana meditator*

*Main bhī vyākula nā banūṅ, jagata vikala nā hoyā;
jīvana jīne kī kalā, satya dharama hai soya.*
May I and may the world be free from agitation.
This is the art of living, this is true Dhamma.

*Dekho apne āpa ko, samajho apanā āpa;
apane ko jāne binā, miṭe na bhava santāpa.*
Observe yourself, understand yourself;
Unless you know yourself, the torments of existence cannot end.

*With best compliments from
MOTILAL BANARSIDASS*

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