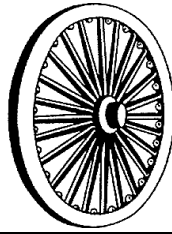


Vipassana



Newsletter

In the tradition of Sayagi U Ba Khin, as

taught by S. N. Goenka

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WORDS OF DHAMMA

*Kamacchando ca byāpādo,
thīnamiddhañca bhikkhuno,
Udhacchaṃ vicikicchā ca,
sabbaso' va na vijjati.*

Sensual craving, hatred,
sloth and torpor, agitation,
and doubt—in this *bhikkhu*,
these exist no more.

—*Theragāthā 77*

The Emperor Asoka and Sayagi U Ba Khin

(2011 marks the 2,555th anniversary of the Buddha's parinibbana and the 2,600th year since his enlightenment and the start of the Buddha sasana. The full moon day of July 15 marked the 2,600th anniversary of the Buddha's first discourse, the *Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta*.)

Two centuries after the Buddha breathed his last, Asoka became Emperor of Magadha. Driven by overweening ambition, he established a vast empire covering much of India and neighbouring countries. But one kingdom had not been brought under his sway: Kalinga, the modern-day Indian state of Orissa.

Furious at its resistance to him, Asoka attacked Kalinga and subjugated it in a bloody war. Then, after the fighting was over, he saw how many innocent people had been killed and how terrible was the suffering of this once-prosperous land. Heartsick at his own actions, He would no longer conquer any kingdom by the force of the sword.

It was at this time that Asoka came to know about the teachings of the Buddha and was instantly attracted. He began by studying the words of the Enlightened One. Then someone told him that knowledge of the texts was not enough to give an understanding of the real meaning of the teachings; that can come only through the development of insight, that is, *vipassanā-bhāvanā*, or Vipassana meditation.

The best place then to learn Vipassana was at Bairath in the state of Rajasthan, where a bhikkhu named Upagupta taught. Handing over power to his subordinates, Asoka set out for Rajasthan. After 300 days he returned to his capital, a changed man. Now his ambition was to spread the teachings of the Buddha throughout his empire; he had been inspired by *ehipassiko*, the wholesome wish that others may come and see the Dhamma.

Printing then was unknown but Asoka was determined to spread the Buddha's teachings among his

subjects. He gave orders to inscribe the core teachings in stone, where everyone could see. This happened little more than two centuries after the Buddha, before his original words had been altered in any way. That is why we see the pure teachings of the Buddha in Asoka's rock inscriptions.

More than mere study of the texts or theory (*pariyatti*), the Buddha gave importance to practice (*paṭipatti*). That is why the Asoka inscriptions often mention the practice of Vipassana.

The Buddha took no account of religious differences, giving his teaching to all. In many cases, people who started as his staunch opponents became his most fervent supporters once they learned what he taught. In ancient India there were two communities, the *samaṇas* and the *brāhmaṇas*. The Buddha tried to unite people of all sects in the practice of Dhamma. Similarly, Asoka made no distinction between *samaṇas* and *brāhmaṇas*. He gave donations to both and encouraged others to do the same.

In fact, with the practice of Vipassana, differences between the two communities began to fade and they lived together in harmony. Asoka's reign saw no communal tension or fighting.

Asoka tried to interest all communities in Vipassana. Far from being the monopoly of any one group, he showed that Vipassana belongs to all. It is universal.

The Buddha sent forth his disciples, telling each to go in a different direction and offer his pure, non-sectarian teaching. The result was that the Dhamma began to spread far and wide through northern India, bringing happiness to many. People from every major system of belief came in contact with the Buddha's teachings and changed for the better.

To bring people of all religious backgrounds to a righteous way of living, Asoka urged them to learn and develop in Vipassana. He appointed male and female

teachers, both members of the Sangha and laypeople. All began to teach Vipassana throughout India. In modern times as well, my revered teacher Sayagyi U Ba Khin taught Vipassana to followers of the Buddha in Myanmar and also to other people of many different backgrounds.

Asoka decided to establish *cetiya*s, or memorials to the Buddha, the length and breadth of his empire. Afterwards bhikkhus came to reside at these calm and inspiring sites, which were ideal places for the teaching of the Dhamma.

Out of compassion, Asoka saw that Vipassana was taught to prison inmates so that they might be transformed. In modern times as well, prison inmates in India, Myanmar, the United States and other countries have the opportunity to change their lives through Vipassana.

Asoka was instrumental in spreading the pure teachings of the Buddha as far afield as Iran, Iraq, Egypt and Europe, although in those countries the memory of the Dhamma faded. The story was different in some Asian countries such as Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia and Laos: there the Dhamma took root with Asoka's help and flourishes still today.

Asoka had the military strength to conquer neighbouring countries and extend the frontiers of his empire. Instead he chose to expand the kingdom of Dhamma, so that people would live a good life. In doing so, he won the hearts of all.

With the passage of centuries, in some countries the teachings of the Buddha did not remain in the original, authentic form as sent by Asoka. But in Myanmar, people preserved the words of the Buddha and the technique of Vipassana meditation in their pristine purity from generation to generation. At least among a few, the theory and practice were handed on from teacher to pupil in their pure form as sent by Asoka.

In modern times the Venerable Ledi Sayadaw decided to revive the ancient tradition of lay teachers of the Dhamma. There was a common belief that 2,500 years after the time of the Buddha, there would be a resurgence of the Dhamma for another 2,500 years. The time was approaching for that resurgence, when the Buddha's teachings could be expected to spread rapidly and widely. To prepare for this moment, Ledi Sayadaw trained Saya Thet Gyi and appointed him the first lay teacher of Dhamma. Saya Thet Gyi in turn taught Vipassana to laypeople as well as some bhikkhus.

After Saya Thet Gyi, the next link in the chain of teachers was my own teacher, Sayagyi U Ba Khin. In him we have a glimpse of both the Buddha and Asoka. In his discourses he spoke at length about *pariyatti*. But in his courses, the focus was on the practice of Vipassana from morning to evening.

As a teacher, Sayagyi made no distinction between people whatever their background. He never spoke critically of any religious group. Instead he tried to understand the teaching of each group from the view

point of Dhamma and to interpret it in light of the words of the Buddha.

Once a well-known writer from the United States, a Christian priest, joined a course with Sayagyi. As usual, the first step was to take refuge in the Triple Gem of the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha. The American resisted doing this, saying that he was willing instead to take refuge in Jesus.

Sayagyi smiled and said, "Very well, do that. After all, the Buddha is not sitting in the heavens, waiting to fulfil the wishes of those who take refuge in him. The refuge is really in his qualities. Jesus also had many wonderful qualities. Take inspiration from his example and try to emulate him in your life. If you take refuge in Jesus, take refuge in his qualities, not in Jesus as a person."

This man agreed and began to work. When the course ended, he came to Sayagyi and begged forgiveness for his initial resistance. He had realized that the pure Dhamma transcends all distinctions between religions.

An important principle of this tradition is that no price can be put on the Dhamma because in fact it is priceless. To earn money by teaching the Dhamma is unethical and completely forbidden. If someone wants to earn money, there are endless business opportunities. But the Dhamma is not a commercial commodity, not something for sale. A businessman makes money by his work and becomes rich; but a teacher of the Dhamma must never amass wealth by charging fees for the teaching. Instead, this tradition strictly follows the Buddha's injunction,

Dhammena na vanaṃ care

Do not make a business of Dhamma.

Anyone who ignores this injunction teaches not Dhamma but its opposite.

During Asoka's reign, the Dhamma remained in its purest form. But a small number of priests of other traditions suffered financial losses as the Dhamma spread, and so they were motivated to introduce changes that would contaminate the teaching. As a consequence, the Dhamma lost its pristine purity 2,000 years ago. In truth it was only a small number who were responsible for this decline, and it would be totally wrong to blame an entire community. In every community there are people of pure heart.

My revered teacher fully lived the ideals of Dhamma. He was a senior member of the civil service, where it was commonplace to amass fortunes through fraudulent practices. But Sayagyi was ripened in Dhamma. He worked in this corrupt environment and emerged without any stain on his character.

Sayagyi refused to accept even a penny from his students. Whenever we would offer him something after a course, he would call for the centre manager to insist that the donation go to the centre and a receipt be duly issued. He was equally scrupulous about accepting loans.

Sayagi owned a small house that was in poor condition. Before he retired, he wanted to repair it so that his children could live there. The builder named a price that I knew was beyond Sayagi's means but for me it was a trifling sum. Sayagi would never ask for financial help, so I politely offered him the amount as a gift. Without hesitation, Sayagi refused, saying that it would be highly improper for a Dhamma teacher to accept even a small amount from a student; donations must be to the centre, for the Dhamma. "Very well," I said, "let me give you a loan. You can pay me back at your convenience." Reluctantly he agreed and the builder set to work.

While Sayagi was still working, he repaid me from his salary. When he retired, a small amount was still owing and this could be repaid only from his modest pension. Whenever he received a cheque, he would send me the full amount without keeping any money for himself. To accept this money was very painful to me; after all, his financial need was much greater than mine. But the principles of Dhamma had to be upheld, and I reluctantly accepted the repayment even though it meant that Sayagi was without income.

At that time my adopted mother was approaching death. She had practised Dhamma under Sayagi's guidance for seven years and he was very fond of her. As a last act of charity, she decided to make donations to many charitable institutions and wanted to include Sayagi himself in the list of recipients. I was very pleased at her thoughtful act, which would free my teacher of debt. But when I handed the money to Sayagi, he blessed my mother and sent for his assistant, telling him to invite bhikkhus the next day and give my mother's gift as *Saṅgha dāna* (donation to the monks). What could I do? With a heavy heart, I had to keep accepting the full amount of Sayagi's small pension as long as the debt was outstanding. Today I remember the high ideals of this great man and I feel inspired. What a rare example he set of fulfilling ethical standards!

Praiseworthy is Sayagi U Ba Khin, my truthful and righteous teacher! I feel very fortunate to walk on the path shown by him. Praiseworthy is the Dhamma and so is the ideal of Dhamma practice that he gave us!

May all become happy by practising the Dhamma.

May all be peaceful!

May all be liberated!

Kalyānamitta S.N. Goenka

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 Sunday, 9 October 2011 (*Sharad Purnima*).

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

Pilgrimage to the Buddha Sacred Sites

The IRCTC (Indian Railways) plans to run 14 special trains (Mahaparinirvan Express) during the winter of 2011-12. The Mahaparinirvan Express from 25.02.2012 to 04.03.2012 will be called **Vipassana Special** and will be reserved primarily for Vipassana meditators. Furthermore, IRCTC has agreed to discount the fare by 15% for meditators, not only for this special trip but for the other 13 trips as well.

To avail this special discount, please send your application to Mr. Hemant Sharma, Email: hemant.sharma@irctc.com, buddhisttrain@irctc.com. Your application must include a certificate from an assistant teacher confirming that you are a Vipassana meditator. Please send copy to *Dhamma Giri* (info@giri.dhamma.org).

For more information:

1. Visit www.railtourismindia.com/buddha
2. Call Hemant Sharma, Tel: (011) 2370-1100, 2370-1174; Mobile: 97176-44798.

Female Servers Required to Serve Long Courses

Dhamma Tapovana, the long course center adjacent to *Dhamma Giri*, conducts courses of 20, 30, 45 and 60 days and needs female servers for these courses. Please send your application for Dhamma service for the upcoming courses in 2011 and 2012. Applicants must have completed a long course and should address their applications to Female Course Office at *Dhamma Giri* (info@giri.dhamma.org).

Vipassana Courses in Phuket, Thailand

Ten-day Vipassana courses (language: Nepali/Hindi) are conducted in Phuket every year by local meditators. This year, they are organizing a ten-day course from 19 to 30 August 2011 with English and Nepali instructions. For more details, contact: Mr. Ram Kumar Basnet, Tel: (081) 9799-489.

New Vipassana Centre in South Gujarat

Legal formalities for construction of a new Vipassana centre in South Gujarat has been completed. Goenkaji has named it *Dhamma Ambika*.

Foundation work up to plinth level has been started for the following three buildings:

- (a) Reception complex,
- (b) Male residential building containing 12 rooms,
- (c) Female residential building containing 10 rooms.

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 Tipiṭaka Website: www.tipitaka.org

The *Chaṭṭha Saṅgāyana Tipiṭaka* with commentaries, subcommentaries and related Pali texts in Roman, Devanagari, Cyrillic, Gujarati, Kannada, Malayalam, Bengali, Telugu, Tamil, Myanmar, and Sinhala scripts. More scripts will be added in future.

Prison Courses Website: www.prison.dhamma.org

Information about Vipassana courses in prisons.

Global Vipassana Pagoda: www.globalpagoda.org

Updated information about the Global Vipassana Pagoda.

Children's Meditation Courses in Mumbai

Date	Course site	Age (years)	Registration
21-8	Ghatkopar	10-16	18 and 19-8
4-9	Matunga	10-16	1 and 2-9
18-9	Ghatkopar	10-16	16 and 17-9

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 Vidut 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). **Matunga:** Amulakh Amirchand High School, Rafi Ahmed Kidwai Road, New SNTD College, King's Circle, Matunga (CR), Tel: 25101096, 25162505.

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
Anushaktinagar	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.]

Online Vipassana Newsletters and Archives

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

NEW RESPONSIBILITIES

Teachers

Mrs. Grace Reed, *Australia*
Spread of Dhamma

Senior Assistant Teachers:

1. & 2. Mr. Sin-Fatt Yeo & Mrs. Pek-Hia Khow, *Malaysia*
3. Mr. Kim-Fong Lee, *Malaysia*
4. Ms. Sara Colquhoun, *New Zealand*
5. Ms. Anna Schlink, *Australia*

ADDITIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Senior Assistant Teachers:

Ms. Lallie Pratt, *USA*
To serve Mid-Atlantic Region, USA

NEW APPOINTMENTS

Assistant Teachers:

1. Mrs. Manjula Bhosale, *Pune*
2. Mr. Sanjay Sanade, *Mumbai*
3. Mr. Bhagwan Sardar, *Yavatmal*
4. Mr. Om Prakash Sharma, *Bharatpur*
5. Mrs. Naomi Apel, *Israel*
6. Mr. Brihas Sarathy, *Canada*

Children's Course Teachers:

1. Mr. Ajit Solanki, *Gandhinagar*
2. Mr. Shankar Thakkar, *Kutch*
3. Mr. Jagdishbhai Patel, *Himmatnagar*
4. Ms. Lata Kovelamudi, *Hyderabad*
5. Mrs. Meghana Pradeepak, *Hyderabad*
6. Mr. Raju Pandala Ranga Reddy, *A. P.*
7. Mr. Sai Prasad Chiluveri, *Nizamabad*
8. Mr. Prahlad Tarigoppula, *Hyderabad*
9. Daw Nu Nu Aung, *Myanmar*
10. Daw Om Mar, *Myanmar*
11. Daw Cethar, *Myanmar*
12. U Sai Than Aung, *Myanmar*
13. U toe Toe Win, *Myanmar*
14. Mr. Chang Jih Liang, *Taiwan*
15. Ms. Huang Wen Ling, *Taiwan*
16. Mr. Lin Yi –Sheng, *Taiwan*

DHAMMA DOHAS

Śīla samādhi jñāna kī, bahe trivenī dhāra;
ḍubakī māre so tire, ho dukha sāgara pāra.

Morality, concentration, and wisdom—
three streams have joined and flow together.
By plunging into their confluence,
you cross the ocean of suffering.

Gaṅgā jamunā sarasvatī, śīla samādhi jñāna;
tīnoṅ kā saṅgama hove, pragāte pada niravāṇa.

The true Ganges, Jamuna, and Sarasvati
are morality, concentration, and wisdom.
Where these three streams converge, *nibbāna* manifests.

With much mettā,
A Vipassana meditator

Śīlavāna ke dhyāna se, prajñā jāgrta hoyā;
antaramana kī granthiyāṅ, sabhī vimocita hoṅya.

When a person of morality concentrates, insight awakens.
The knots in the depths of the mind are all untied.

Mana ke karama sudhāra le, mana hī pramukha pradhāna;
kāyika vācika karama to, mana kī hī santāna.

Correct your mental actions; mind is first and foremost.
Deeds of body and speech are offspring of the mind.

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

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Vipassana Research Institute

Dhamma Giri, Igatpuri 422 403

Dist. Nashik, Maharashtra, India

Fax: [91] (02553) 244176

Tel: [91] (02553) 244076, 244086, 243712, 243238

Email: info@giri.dhamma.org

Website: www.vridhamma.org