

## Words of Dhamma

Vācānurakkhī manasā susaṃvuto,  
kāyena ca nākusalaṃ kayirā,  
ete tayo kamma pathe visodhaye,  
ārādhaye maggāmisippaveditaṃ.

*Dhammapada 281, Maggavagga.*

Watchful of speech, well restrained in mind,  
let him do naught unskillful through his body.  
Let him purify these three ways of action and  
win the path realized by the sages.

## The messenger of inner peace: Satya Narayan Goenka

....Continued from last issue

### The Golden Years

The opportunity to come to India for Goenkaji came in 1969. Goenkaji's parents had earlier left for India, and his mother had fallen sick. The government was willing to give him a passport valid for travel to India.

Before Goenkaji left on his journey, U Ba Khin formally appointed him a teacher of Vipassana. On two courses for the Indian community in Myanmar, Goenkaji taught with his teacher by his side. The sites were chosen to provide the kind of conditions Goenkaji could expect to face in India. The first course was on the rooftop of a building in downtown Mandalay, located between two cinemas from which film music blared. The accommodation consisted of shelters made of bamboo matting. But this did not bother the students, and Goenkaji had the good fortune to receive on-the-job training from a master teacher.

With U Ba Khin at his elbow, for the first time Goenkaji gave the discourses that were to become so familiar. Since the course participants were Indians, he spoke in Hindi. Sayagyi understood the language even though he did not speak it very well; every so often he would lean over and whisper to Goenkaji, "Now tell them about some of the disciples of the Buddha! Tell about Mother Visākhā! Tell them about Aṅgulimāla!" And Goenkaji would drop whatever he was saying to do as his teacher directed. Later he would say that for him, giving one of his talks was like simply opening a faucet: without any effort, the words poured forth.

### To India

In June 1969, Goenkaji boarded a plane from Yangon to Kolkata in India. Before they parted, his teacher had said to him, "You are not the one going—I am going, the Dhamma is going!" U Ba Khin himself could not leave Myanmar, but he was sending his pupil as his representative, as a Dhamma-dūta (Pali, "emissary of the Dhamma").

Goenkaji was very aware that this was a historic moment. Still, he clung to the thought that his stay in India would be brief and he would soon return to his revered teacher and beloved homeland. In fact, more

than two

decades

were to

elapse

before he

again saw  
Myanmar.

He arrived  
in a country  
where few  
people knew  
him and the  
teaching of  
the Buddha  
was held in  
low regard.

The very

word "Vipassana" had been forgotten. But with the help of his family, Goenkaji

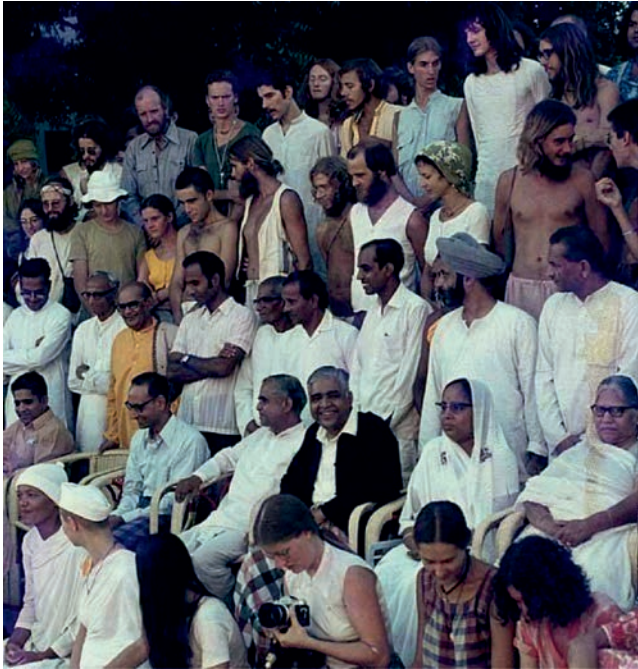
was soon conducting his first 10-day course in Mumbai. Among the participants were his parents and a handful of other people, including a woman from France. On the last day, she invited Goenkaji to her country; he told her to ask him again in 10 years.

The first course led to another, and another, and so the Wheel of Dhamma started turning in the land of its origin. The return to Myanmar would have to wait; there were people eager to learn Vipassana, and the Dhamma emissary could not refuse them. Goenkaji crisscrossed the country, often traveling third class in the crowded Indian trains. He had no old students to help him; instead he himself would assign rooms at the course site, and at meals he might sit with the students or serve the food. Often a tent functioned as the meditation hall. One night in Rajgir, a storm blew down the tent. But early next morning Goenkaji was on his seat, chanting to encourage the meditators.

The conditions were often rough; he had little money and less support; he was alone since his wife Ilaichi (called by meditators "Mataji") had remained behind in Myanmar at first. Yet he radiated joy—the joy of someone doing what he had been born to do.



*Shri Satya Narayan Goenka,  
January 30, 1924 - September 29, 2013*



*At the end of a course in Chennai,  
south India, 1973*

In those first years, Goenkaji taught in Hindi only. He knew English but he had learned it for business purposes, and he thought his command of the language was inadequate for teaching Vipassana meditation. But as his reputation grew, non-Indians clamored to learn from him. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, there were many Westerners who had come to India in search of something they could not necessarily identify. Some of them urged Goenkaji to accept them in his courses, but he cited the language difficulty. Undeterred, the students then wrote to U Ba Khin in Myanmar. Soon a letter arrived from Yangon, ordering Goenkaji to offer courses in English. As always, he complied with his teacher's wishes.

The first English course was in October 1970 in Dalhousie, a hill station in the Himalayas. There and later in Bodh Gaya, the site of the Buddha's Enlightenment, a steady stream of young Westerners came to Goenkaji. Some of them were half-naked with the long, matted hair of Hindu ascetics. Others wore clothes more suited to a beach holiday. Most of the men were bearded; most of the women wore their hair long, flowing loose down their backs—not neatly braided, as proper Indian women wore theirs. To Goenkaji, their disheveled appearance made no difference; he shared the treasure of the Dhamma with all who came to him. Some of them joined a 10-day retreat and then were never seen again. Others followed Goenkaji across the country from course to course. Among them were people who went on to become well-known figures in different traditions. Among them also were people who now are the most senior teachers appointed by Goenkaji.

Soon, in coffee shops and restaurants that catered to the Western travelers, there were notices of Vipassana courses. Sometimes the teacher was referred to as "the singing guru," because of Goenkaji's rich and melodious voice. He used it to chant ancient compositions about the Buddha's teaching and also for his own verses in Hindi and Rajasthani. In the hush of the meditation hall on a chilly morning or late in the evening, the sounds vibrated in the air, comforting, guiding and uplifting.

At the start of a course, he came in, sat down and waited quietly as the students found their places, arranged their cushions and fell silent. Then he opened his mouth, and within instants he had transformed the shabby rented room or drafty tent into a place outside time, where all were engaged in a fascinating exploration of inner truth. Hour after hour he would be there with the students. He did everything live—the chantings, the instructions throughout the day, the evening talks. The Dhamma poured out of him.

At 9:00 p.m. the daily program came to an end. After a long day that had started in the pre-dawn chill, the students were tired. But almost all of them remained in the hall; they did not want to miss the evening question period. People would line up or cluster near Goenkaji's seat. Some questioners clearly wanted to challenge or debate with him. Others were genuinely confused or agitated. Some wanted confirmation that their own views were right. Others sought to prove him wrong. Goenkaji handled each one smilingly, tenderly, often laughing. Usually they would end up laughing with him. They might not even remember the words but they felt they had received the answer they needed.

At the end of a course, he gave a closing talk and meditated with the students for a few minutes. Then he walked out of the hall, continuing to chant in Hindi, "Saba ka mangala—May all be happy, may all be happy." Slowly the sound of his chanting faded away. The meditators were back in a shabby room somewhere in an Indian city, with street vendors crying their wares outside, dogs barking, friends or loved ones to meet, letters to read, trains to catch, plans to make. But for many of them, something had changed. Life would never be the same.

### **This is the only repayment**

Goenkaji kept reporting back to his teacher, and U Ba Khin took great pleasure in his letters. On one course there had been 37 students, and U Ba Khin was delighted: "Thirty-seven for the 37 factors of enlightenment!" he said, referring to a term in the ancient Pali texts. He was still more pleased when Goenkaji reported that he had conducted a course for 100 students. Little did anyone imagine that some day that would be considered a small course.





Goenkaji was teaching at the Burmese Buddhist Vihara in Bodh Gaya in January 1971 when a telegram arrived to tell him that Sayagyi U Ba Khin had breathed his last. “The light has gone out,” he told the students. He keenly felt the loss. But he soon realized that he was aware of his teacher’s presence more strongly than ever. It was as if U Ba Khin had finally joined him in India.

What was there to do now except to carry on? His teacher had helped him when it seemed that there was no way out of his suffering. U Ba Khin had lovingly taught him Vipassana and trained him to teach. He had appointed Goenkaji a teacher, given him a mission and sent him on his way. Goenkaji would continue this mission to the end of his life. Every day of a course, he himself declared in his morning chanting:

From every pore flows gratitude, I can never repay this debt. Living the life of Dhamma, Serving suffering people, Sharing the happiness of Dhamma with all— This is the only repayment.

So that is what he did. From the far south of India to the Himalayas, from the deserts of western Gujarat to the jungles of Bengal, Goenkaji continued on his way. The landscape changed, the faces changed, he himself would change and age, but the journey went on.

## The Hill of Dhamma

In those first years, the courses were in temporary facilities—ashrams, viharas, churches, schools, pilgrims’ rest houses, hostels, sanatoriums, wherever space might be cheaply available. Each site worked but each had its drawbacks, and always there were the tasks of setting up at the start of a course and dismantling the site at the end. So the search started for a place specifically for Vipassana meditation, where courses would be offered year-round.

This is why, late in 1973 in the town of Igatpuri, a shopkeeper and a young municipal worker flagged down Goenkaji’s car on the way from a course in the town of Deolali to his home in Mumbai. They had found a few possible sites outside the town, and they begged Goenkaji to stop and have a look. He agreed reluctantly; his leg was in a cast from a recent fracture and he did not want to delay his return home.

The first two sites were obviously not appropriate, but there was one more to see. The car turned onto a rutted path, long out of use. It led up to a hilltop dotted with huge mango trees that shadowed buildings dating from the days of the British Raj. Some of them were in poor repair, and goats wandered in and out of one bungalow. Behind loomed a bare mountainside.

Goenkaji closed his eyes for a few moments. Then he said, “Yes, a suitable place.” At once the businessman traveling with him offered to buy the land. This was the start of what became known as Dhamma Giri, the Hill of Dhamma.

The center started modestly, with a handful of mainly Western meditators taking up residence. They wrote to Goenkaji, asking how they should spend their time. He replied, “Meditate, meditate, meditate. Clean yourselves and clean the meditation center.” They set to work first with scrub brushes and water from the well. Once they had space, they devoted six to eight hours a day to the real task of sitting. Soon more people arrived, and then construction started. Dhamma Giri officially opened in October 1976.

It was an exciting moment but also a difficult one. As often happens, there had been cost overruns. The trust owed money to the contractors and was unable to pay them. For example, it lacked funds to pay for the new teacher’s residence. When Goenkaji found out, he refused to stay there. Instead, he and his wife Mataji moved into one of the dorms even though it had no plumbing. Bamboo matting screened a bathing enclosure for them next to the dormitory, and they used the common toilets like everyone else. This is what they did for the first half-year that Dhamma Giri was in operation, until the trust was able to pay the contractors.

Eventually more funds came in, more buildings sprang up and construction began of a pagoda like the one at U Ba Khin’s center in Yangon. A team of Western volunteers worked alongside the Indian laborers; the resident monk at the Burmese Vihara in Bodh Gaya came to help with the ornamental plastering. In early 1979, the pagoda officially opened. Present for the occasion were Sayama Daw Mya Thwin (who had assisted U Ba Khin with students at his center) and her husband U Chit Tin (who had worked for Sayagyi in the government).



*The original pagoda at Dhamma Giri, shortly after its completion in 1979*

Not long after came another breakthrough: Goenkaji boarded a plane to teach his first courses in the West. The woman who had invited him 10 years before remembered what he had said. Now she contacted him again, this time armed with an invitation from the French Federation of Yoga Teachers.

..... to be continued in next issue, by courtesy of Vipassana  
Newsletter (International Edition, Vol. 40, No.3, Oct. 2013)



### Children's Meditation Courses in Mumbai

Date	Course site	Age (years)	Registration
First Sunday	Dombivili	10-16	2 days before Course
First Sunday	Ulhasnagar	10-16	2 days before Course
First Sunday	Matunga	10-16	2 days before Course
Second Sunday	Sanpada	10-16	2 days before Course
Second Sunday	Andeheri	10-16	2 days before Course
Third Sunday	Ghatkopar	10-16	2 days before Course
Fourth Sunday	Airoli	10-16	2 days before Course
12-1-14	Goregaon	10-16	9 & 10-1-2014
16-2	Goregaon	10-16	13 & 14-2-2014
23-3	Goregaon	10-16	20 & 21-3-2014
20-4	Goregaon	10-16	17 & 18-4-2014
18-5	Goregaon	10-16	15 & 16-5-2014
15-6	Goregaon	10-16	12 & 13-6-2014

**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:** **Goregaon:** Vipassana Counselling & Research Centre, Siddharth Municipal General Hospital, Goregaon (W), Tel: 2624-2025 & 98690-23884. **Dombivili:** K B Vira High School, Near Municipal Office, Dombivili (E) Mob. 9930301594. **Ulhasnagar:** 703-A Block /1405, Gokul Nagar, Behind Netaji School, Near Mahesh Granite, Tel. 9970755130, **Matunga:** Amulakh Amirchand

High School, Rafi Ahmed Kidwai Road, New SNDT College, King's Circle, Matunga (CR), Mob. 98201-50336. **Sanpada:** Navi Mumbai Mahanagar Palika School, Sector 5, Sanpada. Tel: 7738649821, 9699862322, 9223300575, **Andeheri:** Mayfair Meridian Meditation Hall, Ceaser Road, Off S.V. Road, Amboli, Near St. Blaise Church Andeheri, Mob. 9820459449. 9664782244, 9699668642. **Ghatkopar:** SNDT School, New Building, Cama Lane, Ghatkopar (W), Opp Vidyut Society, Mumbai 400086. Tel: 25011096, 25162505. **Airoli:** Saraswati School, Sector 5, Airoli, Mob. 9892565765.

Please call two days in advance for registration.

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

### One-Day Mega course in the presence of Rev. Mataji on the occasion of the death anniversary of Sayagyi U Ba Khin

The course will be conducted in the main Dome of the Global Vipassana Pagoda from 11 am to 4 pm on **January 19, 2014, Sunday**. Recorded Discourse of the late Goenkaji will be played at 3 pm; non-meditators are also welcome to attend the discourse. Register online at [www.oneday.globalpagoda.org](http://www.oneday.globalpagoda.org) Registration on Phone [between 11am and 5pm]: (022)33747501– ext: 9; (022)28451170 –ext: 9; (022)33747543; (022)33747544. Email registration: [oneday@globalpagoda.org](mailto:oneday@globalpagoda.org).

#### NEW APPOINTMENTS

##### Senior Assistant Teachers

1. Mr. Rob Burt, New Zealand
- 2-3. Dr. John Geraets & Ms. Karen Weston, New Zealand
4. Mrs. Paula McVicker, Australia

##### Assistant Teachers

1. Mr. Deepak Narkhede, Jalgaon
2. Mr. Vijay Singh Rajawat, Mumbai
3. Mr. Takshak Potdar, Kolhapur
4. Mr. Pravin Daga, Chennai
5. Mr. Mohan Reddy, Rangareddy
6. Mr. Markandeyulu Velamuri, Hyderabad
7. Mrs. Urmila Sharma, Rewa
8. Mr. Xavier Salvador, Spain
9. Mrs. Nelly Paillard, France
10. Mr. Yuval Noah Harari, Israel
11. Mr. Farhad Rodpour Falati, Iran

12. Mrs. Florence Qiaoling Fang, China
13. Ms. Jo Hsin Hsiao, Taiwan
14. Mr. Galen Foster, Canada
- 15-16. Mr. Patrick Murphy & Mrs. Tracy Hudson, USA
17. Mr. Craig D. Miller, USA
18. Ms. Jane McBride, USA

##### Children's Course Teachers

- 1-2. Mr. Trilok Shanker and Mrs. Mamta Sharma, Jodhpur
- 3-4. Mr. Ramesh Chandra and Mrs. Aparna Shrivastava, Rawatbhata
5. Mr. Ratanlal Sharma, Rawatbhata
6. Mrs. Prem Sakhi Soni, Jodhpur
7. Ms. Mumtaz Khan, Churu
8. Mrs. Snehlata Boudh, Churu
9. Mrs. Neena Kapoor Patna
10. Mrs. Kamini Bomgen, Darjeeling

11. Mrs. Rashmi Mangal, Ahmedabad
12. Mr. Kiran Sahoo, Aurangabad
13. Mrs. Manju Dahat, Aurangabad
14. Mr. Manoj Khandare, Aurangabad
15. Mrs. Kiron Kumari Mishra, Aurangabad
16. Mr. Dushing Karbhari, Aurangabad
17. Mr. Devidas Hiwale, Aurangabad
18. Mrs. Rashmi Gogate Jalna
19. Mr. Rajendra Ratnaparkhi, Jalna
20. Mr. Sudhir Birle Latur
21. Mr. Rajesh Pokharikar, Nanded
22. Mrs. Corinna Sharrief, USA
23. Mrs. Ami Fletcher, USA
24. Ms. Salina Gomez, USA

25. Mr. Pradeep Jonnalagadda, USA
26. Ms. Chloe Goode, USA
- 27-28. Mr. Praveen Krishnamurthy & Mrs. Afreen Malim, USA
29. Mr. Brian McNamara USA
30. Mrs. Genevieve Herreria USA
31. Mrs. Stella Hill, USA
32. Mr. Deepak Lakhi Dubai
33. Mrs. Algirmaa Baljinnayam, Mongolia
34. Mrs. Burnee Tsendjav, Mongolia
35. Mrs. Oyuna Erdene, Mongolia
36. Mrs. Tsolmon Natsag, Mongolia
37. Mrs. Bayanjargal Gotsoo, Mongolia
38. Mrs. Tsogzolmaa Namchin, Mongolia
39. Ms. Khaing Than Oo, Myanmar
40. M. May Thet Htar, "
41. Mr. Win Maung, "
42. Ms. Su Hlaing Aung, "
43. Ms. Mu Mu Soe, Myanmar
44. Mr. U Ohn Pe Myint, Myanmar

### DHAMMA DOHAS

*Sadguru kī karuṇā jagī, diyā dharma kā sāra.*

*Sampradāya ke bojha kā, utarā sira se bhāra.*

The compassion arose in the righteous teacher towards me and he gave me the essence of truth. The heavy burden of tradition came down from my head.

*Dhanya! Dhanya! Guruvar mile, aise santa sujāna.*

*Chūṭī mithyā kalpanā, chūṭā mithyā jñāna.*

Blessed I am, blessed I am, I got such a saint, a wise one. The wrong view slipped off and wrong understanding left me.

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Fax: [91] (02553) 244176

Tel: (02553) 244076, 244086, 243712, 243238

Email: [info@giri.dhamma.org](mailto:info@giri.dhamma.org);

Website: [www.vridhamma.org](http://www.vridhamma.org)