

# Vipassana Newsletter

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

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## WORDS OF DHAMMA

*Pāpañce puriso kayirā,  
na naṃ kayirā punappunam;  
na tambhi chandaṃ kayirātha,  
dukkheho pāpassa uccayo.*

If a person commits evil,  
he should not do it again and again;  
he should not take delight in it,  
for the accumulation of evil leads to suffering.

—Dhammapada 117

## On Dhamma Service

**Question:** What is the most important quality needed while serving the Dhamma?

**Goenkaji:** If you don't have *mettā*, it is better that you don't give Dhamma service. Sometimes a Dhamma server shouts like a policeman or a policewoman at students who do not observe the rules, and this is totally wrong. Every Dhamma server is actually a representative of the Dhamma; students watch their behaviour and if they are just as arrogant as others, the students will lose confidence in the Dhamma.

Therefore Dhamma service is a great responsibility. If someone cannot work with *mettā* in a humble way, it is better to refrain from taking this responsibility.

**Question:** Why is abstaining from sexual misconduct and intoxicants so important for a Dhamma server?

**Goenkaji:** They are important in order to progress in Dhamma. All the *sīlas* are important for a Dhamma server, but these two are the most important.

If you keep taking any intoxicant you will remain a slave to intoxication, and you cannot progress in Dhamma; the mind cannot be balanced when it is enslaved. You must become your own master, and intoxication cannot make you your own master.

Similarly for sexual misconduct: by practising Dhamma, both husband and wife will ultimately reach the stage where they naturally live a life of celibacy. But if there is a relationship with more than one person, sexual desire will continue to increase. It is like adding petrol to a fire that you want to put out.

So the first discipline is that a sexual relationship should only exist between spouses. If both are good Vipassana meditators, when passion arises they observe the sensations arising and accept the fact, "There is passion in my mind." As they observe the sensations they will probably come out of passion. But

if they don't and have bodily relations, there is nothing wrong because they have not broken their *sīla*. I have seen many cases where, if they keep working like this, people easily come out of passion and still feel so contented, so happy. The need does not arise. A sexual relationship is actually designed by nature for reproduction, but it is human beings' weakness to go against nature and use it only for passion.

Slowly, if you keep working with Vipassana, you will come out of passion and reach a stage where there is a natural celibacy—a celibacy achieved through suppression doesn't help—and this natural celibacy will help you to develop so much in Dhamma. You progress by leaps and bounds once you reach that stage.

**Question:** What are the benefits of bowing down to pay respect?

**Goenkaji:** In the eyes of most people when you bow down to somebody you pay respect to that person, and that is all there is to it. For a Vipassana meditator it is really worthwhile keeping the attention at the top of the head and bowing down to somebody who is giving *mettā*.

I remember my teacher instructed us how to bow down: The first time should be with awareness of sensations at the top of the head and the understanding of *anicca* (impermanence), the second time should be with the understanding of *dukkha* (suffering), and the third time should be with the understanding of *anattā* (lack of self). At times when we bowed down, he would ask, "Did you bow down properly?"

When you are observing *anicca* in this area you understand, "Look, everything is changing." When you observe *dukkha* you understand, "Whatever is

changing is a source of *dukkha*; it can't be a source of happiness." With *anattā* you understand, "There is no 'I' in this, no 'mine', it is just a mind-matter phenomenon." So the way to bow down is with understanding and awareness of sensations at the top of the head.

**Question:** I know that an experienced Dhamma server should treat new students and visitors with more *mettā* than old students. How can one do this?

**Goenkaji:** By practising Dhamma more and more. When your mind becomes purer, naturally you will have more *mettā*. In an earlier question you asked why it is important to practise daily. Understand, if you don't practise daily you will not have any *mettā*, and if you have no *mettā* you cannot serve. So practise daily, make yourself strong in Dhamma, and naturally your *mettā* will become strong and have a great impact on the students who visit.

As I said, those who come to a course always look at the Dhamma servers, the teacher and all those who manage the centre. If they find these people are not practising what is being taught here, they will think that this is a sham. They will say to themselves, "Look, the technique has not helped those who practise here, why should I waste my time?"

Be very careful: Make yourself strong in Dhamma so that you can give more *mettā*. Keep the atmosphere full of *mettā*, full of *mettā*. If you do that you will be successful and the centre will be successful; more and more people will be benefited.

**Question:** If our senior in Dhamma takes an independent decision which goes against the guidelines you have formulated, what should we as Dhamma servers do?

**Goenkaji:** Very humbly and politely place your view before this person, saying, "Well, according to my understanding of the guidelines, this is an incorrect decision. I believe the guidelines suggest another course of action." Then your senior can explain the reasons for his or her decision. If you still find there is a difference of opinion you can say, "Since we do not agree on this matter I will write to a senior teacher or to Goenkaji. Let us explain the situation to a senior and let him or her decide." But never write to a senior without first discussing your difference of opinion with this person, otherwise it would be backbiting, a breakage of *sīla*. Be careful not to break your vocal *sīla*.

Often people write letters to me saying, "So-and-so is behaving like this. So-and-so is doing this." Then I ask whether they have discussed the matter with the person they are complaining about and they reply that they have not. In such a situation why write to me?

It is very important that you talk over the problem with the person concerned first. Most of your difficulties will be settled when you discuss the matter

directly—not with a negative attitude but a positive attitude, making an effort to understand the other person's view. Maybe your view is wrong or maybe the elder's view is wrong, and when you discuss with them things will become clearer. If you find that the situation is not becoming clearer, then there is nothing wrong in informing other elders.

**Question:** How does one find the balance between selfless service and taking care of oneself?

**Goenkaji:** If one cannot take care of oneself, what service will one give? First take care of yourself, and then start giving selfless service.

\* \* \*

In daily life, there are many ups and downs. To maintain equanimity and to generate love and compassion despite these vicissitudes is the training of Vipassana. When Vipassana meditators give Dhamma service, they learn in a healthy atmosphere how to apply Dhamma in life.

While giving service you come across different types of meditators. Some may be lazy, or talkative, or rude. Sometimes an immature Dhamma server reacts in kind and replies rudely or behaves like a gaoler. But you are trained that, in spite of any mistakes made by the students, you must not become angry. Instead you must maintain a balanced mind filled with love and compassion. You may make mistakes and learn to correct yourself, and in this way, you learn how to face unwanted situations equanimously. In the atmosphere of a Dhamma centre or course, it is easier to learn how to face various situations, and then you can start to apply this wisdom in your daily life. This is the training ground for each server to learn how to live a good life.

The Buddha said that a good Dhamma person has two qualities: the quality of selflessly serving others and the quality of gratitude for help received. These two qualities are rare.

A Dhamma server has the opportunity to develop both qualities. You practise serving others without expecting anything in return, and you start to develop a feeling of gratitude towards the Buddha, who discovered this wonderful technique and gave it to the world, and towards the chain of teachers, right from the Buddha up to today, who maintained this technique in its pristine purity. One feels like repaying the debt of gratitude by serving others in order to fulfil the mission of the Teacher.

One feels so happy and contented serving others and helping them to come out of their misery. Therefore Dhamma service works both ways: It helps others, and it helps the Dhamma server too.

May you all gain strength in Dhamma for your own benefit, and may you continue to serve others for the good and benefit of so many. 🙏

### First Vipassana Course in Ethiopia

Ethiopia's first Vipassana course was held at a Christian retreat centre located on the beautiful lake Babogaya from 30 January to 10 February 2008. A rented bus was used to bring most students to and from the course site in Debra Zeyt, about 2 hours drive from Addis Ababa. Twenty students (12 new male and 8 new female students, including 2 Christian nuns) participated in this course and worked with dedication and strong effort. Almost all the students were Ethiopians living in Addis Ababa. Two old students joined part time for the first half of the courses. The course was served by seven Dhamma servers: Ethiopian, Indian, Canadian, French and South African. The course was conducted in English and Amharic, which is one of the main languages of Ethiopia.

The meditation premises was shared with a handful of Catholic nuns and a few priests—they were so impressed by the serious effort of the students, including the young men, that they requested a short introductory talk about Vipassana. After the talk, all of them wanted to participate in the next course. Two nuns, one from Ethiopia, and one from Kenya participated in the ten-day course, and were very pleased with their experiences. A Hindu priest also participated and was thrilled to learn the technique.

On *mettā* day, everyone shared their experiences and it became clear that the course was a success. Local old students have now already taken up the different responsibilities necessary to ensure continuation of the spread of Dhamma in Ethiopia. The first group-sitting in Addis Ababa on the weekend after the course was attended by 15 old-students. New venues are being explored for the next course proposed for June or July 2008. The children's course material is now being translated into Amharic and will soon be recorded so that children's courses can be organized soon. The Wheel of Dhamma is turning in Ethiopia!

### Long Term Dhamma Service in Spain

The position of centre manager in *Dhamma Neru*, Spain, will become vacant in the beginning of April this year 2008. *Dhamma Neru* is 50 km north of Barcelona, Spain. It is located in a river valley near a small town and surrounded by mountains and forests. Serious Vipassana meditators maintaining regular practice and *sīla*, 18 years of age or older, with computer skills and having a drivers license, valid in Spain may apply. Foreign students will have to take care of visa or residence permits themselves. Couple managers are welcome too. **Contact:** Tel: [34] 93-848-2695; Email [info@neru.dhamma.org](mailto:info@neru.dhamma.org).

### Children's Courses in Mumbai Schools

Vipassana Research Institute has started a program to teach Anapana to school children in BMC schools. In 2007, Anapana courses were conducted for about 6000 students appearing in the S.S.C. examination. This year, courses will be conducted for about 10000 students of IX Std. Courses for these children will resume from first week of April 2008 and will continue until end of May 2008. The schedule of courses is available online at <http://www.vri.dhamma.org/anapana/bmc.html>

There is a great need for Dhamma servers to work in these courses. Meditators who have completed at least three ten-day courses and are under the age of 50 are welcome to serve in these courses. They must have the aptitude and a desire to work with children. Training will be provided for the same. They may contact Aditya Sejal, 98200-22990 or Ramnath Shenoy, 98203-74006 or email [childrencourse@vsnl.com](mailto:childrencourse@vsnl.com)

### Courses at Global Pagoda

Ten-day courses at *Dhamma Pattana*, Global Pagoda from 27 February to 9 March and 12 to 23 March have been cancelled due to construction work. Ten-day courses, which are reserved for old students at present, will restart probably in the second half of April. Goenkaji may be present during these courses. For schedule of courses at Dhamma Pattana, please contact VIA, *Dhamma Giri*, Igatpuri 422 403, Email: [info@giri.dhamma.org](mailto:info@giri.dhamma.org), and send applications (marked *Dhamma Pattana*, Global Pagoda course) to *Dhamma Giri*.

**One-day courses** are being organized at the Global Pagoda every Sunday from 11 am to 5 pm. Health permitting, Goenkaji will be present during the one-day course on the **third** Sunday of every month, which will be conducted in the main meditation hall of the Global Pagoda. (One-day Vipassana courses are only for those who have completed a ten-day Vipassana course.)

Lunch will be served to the course participants in addition to tea and biscuits at 10 am and in the evening.

Meditators are requested to bring your own water bottles. However they can refill their bottles at the Global Pagoda. They should switch off their mobile phones and observe noble silence during the course.

There is no facility available at present for overnight stay of one-day course students at the Global Pagoda.

**Registration for these one-day courses is compulsory.**

For registration, contact: Mr. Derek Pegado,

Tel: (022) 2845-1206; 2845-1204, 2845-2261 (from Monday to Saturday, 11 am to 5 pm). Email: [globalpagoda@hotmail.com](mailto:globalpagoda@hotmail.com)

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

### Goenkaji's Discourses on Television

**Aastha:** Daily, 9:40 to 10 am

**Hungama:** and **Bindass:** Daily, 4.30 to 6.00 am

**Zee: Urja,** Daily, 4:30 am

**USA: Aastha TV** at 6 pm EST (Monday to Friday) on WORLDDIRECT platform of DIRECTV on channel no. 2005. (Please confirm exact telecast timings.)

### Vipassana Websites

**Vipassana introduction:** [www.dhamma.org](http://www.dhamma.org)

Contains information about Course Schedules of Vipassana centres worldwide, Application Form for ten-day courses, etc.

**Dhamma Giri:** [www.vri.dhamma.org](http://www.vri.dhamma.org)

Contains information about Indian Vipassana centres and Schedule of Courses, VRI Newsletters, research papers, publications, etc.

**Pali Tipiṭaka Website:** [www.tipitaka.org](http://www.tipitaka.org)

Contains the Chaṭṭha Saṅgāyana Tipiṭaka alongwith commentaries, subcommentaries and related Pali texts. in Roman, Devanagari, Cyrillic, Gujarati, Kannada, Malayalam, Myanmar, and Sinhala scripts. More scripts will be added in future.

**Prison Courses Website:** [www.prison.dhamma.org](http://www.prison.dhamma.org)

**Global Pagoda Website:** [www.globalpagoda.org](http://www.globalpagoda.org)

### Online Vipassana Newsletters and Archives

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

### Publication of AT Address Book

VRI has published the Address book of assistant teachers and Vipassana centres in January 2008. Assistant teachers and centre managers who have not received a copy as yet are requested to contact Publication Section, VRI, *Dhamma Giri*, Igatpuri 422 403, Tel: [91] (02553) 244076, 244086; Fax: [91] (02553) 244176; Email: [vri\\_admin@dhamma.net.in](mailto:vri_admin@dhamma.net.in)

**Children's Courses in Mumbai**

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

Date	Venue	Age	Registration
6-4	South Mumbai	10-12 yrs	4 & 5-4
13-4	Ulhasnagar	13-16 yrs	10 & 11-4
6-4	South Mumbai	10-12 yrs	4 & 5-4
13-4	Ulhasnagar	13-16 yrs	10 & 11-4
4-5	South Mumbai	14-18 yrs	3 & 4-5
11-5	Ulhasnagar	10-12 yrs	9 & 10-5
18-5	Ghatkopar	13-16 yrs	17 & 18-5
8-6	South Mumbai	9-13 yrs	31-5 & 1-6
29-6	Ghatkopar	10-12 yrs	14 & 15-6
29-6	Matunga	10-12 yrs	14 & 15-6

**Course Timings:** 8:30 am to 2:30 pm. **Registration:** 11 am to 1 pm  
**Course Venues:** **Ghatkopar (W):** SNDT School, New Building, Cama Lane, Opp Vidyut Society. Tel: 2510-1096, 2516-2505.  
**Matunga:** Amulakh Amirchand High School, Rafi Ahmed Kidwai Road, New SNDT College, King's Circle, Matunga (CR), Tel: 2510-1096, 2516-2505. **South Mumbai:** Tel: 2308-1622. **Ulhasnagar:** Guru Nanak High School, Kurla Camp, Ulhasnagar-4. Tel: (0251) 252-2693. NB Please: \*bring cushion, \*register on the specified phone numbers, \*inform in advance if unable to attend after registration, \*arrive on time for the course.  
**Residential children's courses in Mumbai at Khadavli:**  
 23 to 25 May for boys and 27 to 29 May for girls. **Age:** 13-16 years.  
**Registration:** 11 to 21 May. **Venue:** *Dhamma Sarita*, Jivan Sandhya Mangal Sansthan, near Khadavli station. Tel: 2510-1096, 2516-2505.

**ADDITIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

**Ācaryas:**

Mr. Harry & Mrs. Vivian Snyder, *USA*

To serve Mongolia in addition to *Introducing Vipassana in Prisons and Government of USA*

**NEW RESPONSIBILITIES**

**Ācaryas:**

Mr. Ian & Dr. (Mrs.) Shelina Hetherington, *UK*

*Spread of Dhamma*

**Senior Assistant Teachers:**

1. Mr. Bikram Dandiya, *Igatpuri: To assist the centre teachers in serving Dhamma Bodhi and Dhamma Suvattbi*
2. Mr. Abhijit Patil, *Nashik*
3. Ms. Andrea Schmitz, *Germany*

**Assistant Teachers:**

1. & 2. Mr. Prahlad & Mrs. Sangeetha Choudhary, *Indore*
3. Mr. A. Srinivasa Murthy, *Davanagere, Karnataka*
4. Mr. Sachin Natu, *Pune*
5. Mr. Rajkishore Nayak, *Bhubaneswar*
6. Mr. Tatyasaheb Patil, *Kolhapur*
7. Ms. Marieke Landuijt, *the Netherlands*
8. Mr. Adi Loo, *USA*
9. Ms. Veronika Gruber, *Canada*

**Children's Course Teachers:**

1. Mrs. Dhamyanti Bodana, *Mumbai*
2. Mr. Sanket Dedhia, *Mumbai*
3. Mr. Hemant Desai, *Mumbai*
4. Mrs. Vaishali Gondane, *Mumbai*
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6. Mr. Niteen Kasle, *Mumbai*
7. Mrs. Chetna Nagada, *Mumbai*
8. Mr. V. Narayanan, *Chennai*
9. Mrs. Prabhavati Suryawanshi, *Nashik*
10. Mr. N. Premkumar, *Chennai*
11. Mr. C. Siddharth Muthukumar, *Madurai*
12. Mr. P. Thamocharan, *Tirunelveli*
13. Mr. N. Vasanthakumar, *Chennai*
14. Ms. Heidi Green, *UK*

**DHAMMA DOHAS**

*Hindū ho yā Baudḍha ho, Muslim ho yā Jain;  
 Jaba jaba mana mailā kare, taba taba ho becaina.  
 Hindu or Buddhist, Muslim or Jain;  
 One who defiles his mind, becomes agitated.*

*Gorā kālā gebuāñ, manuḷa manuḷa hī boyā;  
 Jo jo mana mailā kare, so hī dukhiyā hoyā.  
 White, black or brown, a human is a human;  
 One who defiles his mind, becomes miserable.*

*Nirdhana yā dhanavāna ho, anapadha yā vidvāna;  
 Jisane mana mailā kiya, usake vyākula prāṇa.  
 Poor or wealthy, illiterate or learned;  
 One who defiles his mind, becomes distressed.*

*Varṇa raṅga se mānavī, ūñca nīca nā hoyā;  
 Kālī gorī gāya kā, dūḍha eka sā hoyā.  
 The colour of a person's skin, does not make one high or low;  
 A cow, whether black or white, give the same milk.*

*With much metta,  
 A Vipassana meditator*

*With best compliments from  
 MOTILAL BANARSIDASS*

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