

Vipassana Newsletter

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

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WORDS OF DHAMMA

*Tañca kammaṃ kataṃ sādhu,
yaṃ katvā nānutappati;
yassa patīto sumano,
vipākaṃ paṭisevati.*

Well done is that deed,
after doing which one repents not,
and one reaps with delight and happiness
the fruit of that deed.

—Dhammapada 68

Good Will for All

S. N. Goenka

(The following is an extract from “Was the Buddha a Pessimist?” which is the translation and adaptation of the VRI Hindi publication “*Kyā Buddha Dukkhavādī The?*” written by Goenkaji. It has been adapted for the Vipassana Newsletter.)

For centuries in India, the Buddha and his teachings have been accused of being pessimistic. The implication is that the Buddha himself was miserable and unhappy. Nothing could be further from the truth. As a perfectly Enlightened One, the Buddha had come out of all the miseries of the world, and lived a life full of contentment and infinite happiness in every situation. To others also he gave nothing but happiness.

If someone is miserable, he can only spread misery. He cannot and does not uphold the welfare of all.

In contrast, the Buddha wished well for all with these words:

Sabbe sattā sukhi hotu.

May all beings be happy.

An incident from his life:

A Brahmin youth named Ambaṭṭha insulted the Buddha with many foul words. When Ambaṭṭha's teacher Pokkharasāti heard about his impropriety, he begged forgiveness from the Buddha on behalf of his disciple. On that occasion, the Buddha said:

Sukhi hotu brāhmaṇa, Ambaṭṭho māṇavo.

O, Brahmin, may (your disciple) Ambaṭṭha be happy.

Another incident:

Suppavāsā of Koliya state was carrying a baby for a much longer time than normal. She was in extreme pain at the time of delivery of the baby. She sent a

message to the Buddha about her condition. Great compassion arose in the Buddha and he sent his blessings:

Sukhinī hotu suppavāsā koliyadhītā.

Arogā arogaṃ puttāṃ vijāyatū.

Suppavāsā, daughter of the Koliyas, may you be happy. May you be healthy and give birth to a healthy boy.

His blessings bore fruit. Such was the compassion of the Buddha and such were his words of benediction. Yet he is called a pessimist by his critics.

Another incident:

After his retirement, King Kosala's royal priest had gone south and settled on the banks of the Godavari. This priest, Brahmin Bāvarī, was 100 years old when he heard that a *Sammā Sambuddha* (A Self-enlightened One) had arisen in the state of Kosala. He sent his sixteen chief disciples to examine the claim. Upon reaching Sāvatti, these disciples satisfied themselves that the recluse Gotama was indeed a Buddha. When one of the disciples saluted the Buddha and extended greetings on behalf of his teacher Bāvarī, the Buddha gave these words of blessing:

Sukhito Bāvarī hotu, sabasissehibrāhmaṇo;

Tvaṃ cāpi sukhito hohi, ciraṃ jīvāhi māṇavo.

May Brahmin Bāvarī be happy along with his disciples! May you also be happy! May you live long!

Would a pessimist who believes that life is nothing but misery give blessing for a long life (implying a curse for extended suffering)? Certainly not.

The Buddha's mind was always full of loving-kindness. He taught his disciples to practice the meditation of loving kindness—that is, compassionate

love, and regard for the welfare of all beings:

Sabbe sattā bhavantu sukhātattā.

May all beings be happy.

Wherever people practise Vipassana in ten-day retreats around the world, they have the experience of this loving kindness. After having purified their minds as much as possible in ten days of intensive Vipassana meditation, they learn the practice of loving kindness (*mettā bhāvanā*). Even during the course, the meditation site is charged with the vibrations of this benevolent declaration:

Bhavatu sabba maṅgalaṃ!

May all beings be happy!

People who attend these courses and experience these benevolent feelings understand that the Buddha was a promulgator of Dhamma, of welfare, of happiness. ☸

Children's Courses in Mumbai

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

| Date | Venue | Age | Registration |
|-------|--------------|-----------|--------------|
| 3-8 | South Mumbai | 10-12 yrs | 1 & 2nd-8 |
| 10-8 | Ulhasnagar | 13-16 yrs | 8 & 9-8 |
| 17-8 | Ghatkopar | 10-12 yrs | 15 & 16-8 |
| 31-8 | Matunga | 13-16 yrs | 22 & 23-8 |
| 7-9 | South Mumbai | 9- 15 yrs | 5 & 6-9 |
| 21-9 | Ulhasnagar | 10-12 yrs | 19 & 20-9 |
| 21-9 | Ghatkopar | 13-16 yrs | 19 & 20-9 |
| 5-10 | South Mumbai | 9- 15 yrs | 3 & 4-10 |
| 12-10 | Ulhasnagar | 13-16 yrs | 10 & 11-10 |
| 19-10 | Ghatkopar | 10-12 yrs | 17 & 18-10 |
| 2-11 | South Mumbai | 9- 15 yrs | 1 & 2-11 |
| 9-11 | Ulhasnagar | 10-12 yrs | 7 & 8-11 |
| 16-11 | Ghatkopar | 13-16 yrs | 14 & 15-11 |
| 23-11 | Matunga | 13-16 yrs | 21 & 22-11 |
| 7-12 | South Mumbai | 9- 15 yrs | 29 & 30-11 |
| 7-12 | Matunga | 13-16 yrs | 29 & 30-11 |

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. **Matunga:** Amulakh Amirchand High School, Rafi Ahmed Kidwai Rd, New SNTD College, King's Circle, Matunga, Tel: 2510-1096, 2516-2505. **South Mumbai:** Tel: 2308-1622. **Ulhasnagar:** Guru Nanak School, Kurla Camp, Ulhasnagar-4. Tel: (0251) 252-2693. NB Please: *bring cushion, *register on specified phone numbers, *inform in advance if unable to attend after registration, *arrive on time for the course.

IN MEMORIAM

Mrs. Kanta Kathane, senior assistant teacher of Vipassana from Bhilai, Chattisgarh, passed away on 13 April 2008 due to heart attack. She served in many areas of Dhamma service and was actively involved in looking after *Dhamma Ketu* since its inception. Mrs. Kathane is survived by her husband, who is a Vipassana teacher.

May she be happy, peaceful and liberated.

VIPASSANA AROUND THE WORLD

European Long Course Center

On January 24, 2008, the European Long-Course Center (ELCC) Trust received confirmation from Herefordshire District Council that its planning application has been accepted for the proposed buildings for *Dhamma Padhāna*, the first dedicated long-course center in Europe. This completes the detailed outline planning permissions needed to build the new center on the land adjacent to *Dhamma Dīpa* in the UK.

The first course dedicated to *Dhamma Padhāna* will begin on September 12. This is a special *Satipatthāna Sutta* course hosted by *Dhamma Dīpa* and will accommodate 200 students. Goenkaji intends to give some of the instructions live by video uplink from India; the students will be able to see Goenkaji on the screen and Goenkaji will be able to see the students. Weather permitting; students will occasionally meditate together on *Dhamma Padhāna* land.

Construction work is planned to start at the end of the course, and there will be a special sitting on the *Dhamma Padhāna* land.

Building will progress as funding is offered. If sufficient funds are available, it is possible there will be an operational center for 50 students as early as the end of 2009, including a meditation hall, cells and private en-suite accommodation. The completed center for 100 students will include permanent cells in a two-story pagoda.

The ELCC Trust welcomes suitably experienced or enthusiastic old students to help with the construction of the new center. This work is dependent on the availability of a professional project manager and will be augmented as needed by professional subcontractors.

If you would like to receive email updates on developments concerning the ELCC, please send a blank email to long-course-exchange-subscribe@eu.region.dhamma.org.

Dhamma Maṅḍa Vipassana Center

The Northern California Vipassana Association has purchased a former resort in Lake County and has been granted a use permit to develop the 17-acre property into a permanent meditation center. Located in the Cobb mountain area, *Dhamma Maṅḍa* is a two-and-a-half-hour drive from the Bay Area, one hour from Santa Rosa, and less than two hours from Sacramento. This lovely property, with its delightful collection of rustic buildings nestled among mature pine, fir and oak trees, will serve meditators well in the years to come.

Fulfilling the conditions of the use-permit requires substantial remodeling, including construction of a new commercial kitchen and expansion of the meditation hall to hold up to 60 students. There will be much work in the coming months to complete these many projects in order to begin offering ten-day courses for approximately 50 students by late fall 2008. For more information, email info@manda.dhamma.org.

First Course at Dhamma Patāpa

Dhamma Patāpa (Majesty of Dhamma) is the Southeast Vipassana Center in Jesup, Georgia, USA. It stands in a beautiful, secluded location on 40 acres of land surrounding the center's cluster of buildings. Majestic old pines, oaks, and other trees and vegetation add to an ideal environment for peaceful meditation.

The land for *Dhamma Patāpa* was bought on December 21, 2005. Ever since, construction has progressed thanks to help from several old students who joined the Dhamma worker construction crew.

Present facilities include a meditation hall for 40 students, dining hall, and accommodation for 30 students as well as teachers, and Dhamma servers.

Peaceful, foliage-lined walking paths for students are available on both sides of the buildings. Since space remains tight, the Center Development Committee has begun planning for a single accommodation building that will allow the comfortable addition of more students, and this plan is expected to move forward as soon as finances allow.

The first course at *Dhamma Patāpa* took place in March 2008. Twenty-eight students finished the course, with six old students providing service. Several more courses have been scheduled for throughout the year.

For more information, email info@patapa.dhamma.org or call Tel. [1] (912) 663-5646 or [1] (770) 456-5385.

A New Home for the Dhamma in Italy

Servers from all over Europe and beyond arrived at the new home of *Dhamma Atala*, the Italian centre, a few days before the first 10-day course to transform the site into a Vipassana centre.

The new *Dhamma Atala* consists of a classic Italian villa and three old stone buildings on a huge plot of land, situated in the peace and calm of the lush green, steep hills of Tuscany. The surroundings are beautiful and inspiring, with a great variety of animals, plants and trees, such as cherry, fig and Mediterranean pine. When the servers arrived, there was no electricity, no running water and a lot to do to do in a very short time.

But it's amazing what can be done by working together for the good of the many. Two days before the course, water starts pouring out of the taps. One day before, the centre got electricity and the mattresses for the students arrived.

On registration day, all the toilets and showers got their own door and the huge pile of rubbish on the courtyard suddenly disappeared. Students arriving for the course have been warned about possibly challenging conditions

But in the evening 43 students are sitting in the meditation hall, which had been brought all the way from the old, rented, *Dhamma Atala*. The course starts turning *Dhamma Atala* into a true Vipassana centre, where birds nest in the female dining hall.

There were 43 students from USA, Poland, Russia,

Slovenia, Belgium, France and of course Italy in the first course. There were some failures of electricity, the water pump, the gas in the kitchen but all these were handled very well and could not disturb the wonderful atmosphere. The baby birds in the female dining hall hatched on day 2 and the first one left the nest on day 9. On *mettā* day many of the new students showed interest in coming back to serve and even in joining committees.

Some of the servers felt very much at home at the new centre and would like to return, for longer periods. It's a wonderful new home for the Dhamma, with all its wonderful nature including fire flies.

May this wonderful new Vipassana centre be a dwelling of pure Dhamma, for the good and liberation of many.

The Dhamma Brothers and Letters from the Dhamma Brothers

The *Dhamma Brothers*, an award-winning documentary film about the first Vipassana courses held at Donaldson Prison in Alabama, has been opening in theatres and receiving an enthusiastic response. It tells a dramatic tale of human potential and transformation as it closely documents the stories of 36 prison inmates who enter into the arduous and intensive Vipassana meditation program. It challenges assumptions about the nature of prisons as places of punishment rather than rehabilitation and raises the question: "Is it possible for these men, some of whom were convicted of horrendous crimes, to change?"

For more information, visit dhammabrothers.com.

The recently released book *Letters from the Dhamma Brothers* gives us direct access to the thoughts, struggles, dreams, and triumphs of the inmates who completed the first Vipassana course at Donaldson, through letters they sent to those who brought the Vipassana course to the prison in 2002. Each man shares his own story of finding the courage to keep sitting; of resisting the temptation to fall back into old habits and negative ways of coping with prison life; of reconciling his past actions with their effects on himself, family, friends, and the victims of his crimes; and of experiencing a bond with the other student inmates that extended far beyond the intense experience of the ten-day course. The Dhamma brotherhood survives even when the Vipassana program itself is suspended and some of the men find it too difficult to keep the practice going.

When the prison once again invites the Vipassana Prison Trust to conduct a three-day course for the old-student Dhamma brothers in January 2006, there is a joyful homecoming and a revival of Dhamma practice and enthusiasm. Six years on and counting, these letters written by the inmates will give readers the chance to decide whether Dhamma can grow even in the most unlikely soil.

For more information about *Letters from the Dhamma Brothers* contact Pariyatti Press: www.pariyatti.org.

ADDITIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES**Ācaryas:**

Mrs. Sajjandevi Dhariwal, *Ajmer*
To serve *Dhamma Pushkar, Pushkar*

Senior Assistant Teachers:

1. Mr. Revchand Shah, *Ahmedabad*
To serve *Dhamma Marudhara, Jodhpur*
2. Mr. Umashankar Thubrikar, *Nagpur*
To assist the centre teachers in serving *Dhamma Nāga, Nagpur*

NEW RESPONSIBILITIES**Ācaryas:**

1. Mr. Sureshchandra Kathane, *Bhilai*
To serve *Dhamma Ketu, Durg*
2. Mr. Suresh Khanna, *Jaipur*
Spread of Dhamma
3. Mr. Takhatmal Kothari, *Jaipur*
Spread of Dhamma
4. Mr. Dinesh Meshram, *Balaghat*
To serve *Dhamma Kānana, Balaghat*
5. & 6. Mr. Rameshwar Lal & Mrs. Anandi Sharma, *Jaipur*
To serve non-centre courses in *Rajasthan*
7. Mr. Babu Ram Yadav, *Jaipur*
To serve prison courses in *Rajasthan*

Senior Assistant Teachers:

1. Mrs. Urmila Devi Airon, *Ajmer*
To assist the centre teachers in serving *Dhamma Pushkar, Pushkar*
2. Mrs. Chandrakala Ilamkar, *Nagpur*
To assist the centre teachers in serving *Dhamma Nāga, Nagpur*
3. & 4. Mr. Ramkrishna & Mrs. Saroj Bante, *Nagpur*
To assist the centre teachers in serving *Dhamma Vasudhā, Hivra*
5. & 6. Mr. Chandra Shekhar & Mrs. Sunita Jain, *Kota*

7. Mr. Hari Prasad Gupta, *Kota*
8. Mrs. Subhadra Khanna, *Jaipur*
9. Mrs. Geeta Maheshwari, *Ahmedabad*
10. Mr. Ramesh Pandit, *Bhopal*
11. Mrs. Ranjana Sawai, *Nagpur*
12. Mr. Bhanwar Singh Sahwal, *Ajmer*
13. & 14. Mr. Gauri Shanker & Mrs. Hemlata Sharma, *Lucknow*
15. Mr. Sita Ram Sharma, *Jaipur*
16. & 17. U Htin Aung & Daw Khin Myint May, *Myanmar*
18. Prof. Dr. (Mrs.) Saskia Ishikawa-Franke, *Japan*
19. & 20. Mr. Patrick & Mrs. Sachiko Klein, *Japan*

NEW APPOINTMENTS**Assistant Teachers:**

1. Mr. Vinay Dahat, *Nagpur*
2. Mr. R. Kannan, *Chennai*
3. Dr. (Mrs.) Nyunt Nyunt Sein, *Myanmar*
4. Mr. Charlie Dowley, *Australia*
5. Ms. Anna Adams, *Australia*
6. & 7. Mr. Justin Goold & Mrs. Ruth Smith, *Australia*
8. Mr. Graham Wilson, *Canada*
9. Mr. Olivier Perez, *Switzerland*
10. Ms. Mirjam Pelle, *the Netherlands*
11. & 12. Mr. Teun Zuiderent-Jerak- & Mrs. Sonja Jerak-Zuiderent, *the Netherlands*

Children's Course Teachers:

1. Ms. Shalini Sundaramurthy, *Bangalore*
2. Mr. Sunil Kumar K.C., *Kasaragod, Kerala*
3. Mr. Uttamrao Kamble, *Beed*
4. & 5. Mr. Mahesh & Mrs. Vandana Walvekar, *Sangli*
6. Mrs. Suchitra Kamble, *Ratnagiri*
7. Mr. Gabriel Gudding, *USA*
8. Mr. Vivek Jain, *USA*

DHAMMA DOHAS

Isa vistrīta saṁsāra meṇ, bhare viṣaya bhaṇḍāra;
Kamala sadriṣ jala meṇ rabe, jāge nahiṇ vikāra.
In this vast universe, a storehouse filled with
sensory objects,
remain like the lotus in the water; let no defilement arise.

Sukha dukha āte hī rabeṇ, jyon bhātā jyon jvāra;
Mana vicalita hove nahiṇ, dekha cadhāva utāra.
Encountering happiness and sorrow,
like high tide and low tide.
The mind does not waver by this ebb and flow in life.

With much mettā,
A Vipassana meditator

Nā to abhinandana kare, nā hī dveṣī hoyā;
Priya apriya sama hī lage, pragyāpati hai soya.
Neither flattering nor harbouring resentment,
To the wise, the agreeable and disagreeable are the same.

Bojha haṭā jaba pāpa kā, pulakita huā śarira;
Lagā chalakane citta meṇ, maṅgala maitrī nira.
When the weight of evil is removed, the body fills with rapture;
the brimming heart overflows with the water of pure love.

With best compliments from
MOTILAL BANARSIDASS

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